THE MAKING OF THE INDIAN NATION

B. G. GOKHALE

ABOUT THIS BOOK

'THE most outstanding characteristic of the history of India during the last hundred years has been the emergence of Indian nationalism and nationhood in the place of the regional "patriotism" and statehood of the past. The unexpressed but vividly felt sense of cultural unity is now transformed into a political unity making itself manifest through the entity called the Indian nation that has emerged on the stage of human history. Mountains and plains, highlands and valleys, coastal areas and deserts have determined the contours of Indian history in which almost all the religions known to man have played a part. The conflict between geography and history which formed the core of Indian history so far has now been resolved.'

A miracle—and *The Making of the Indian Nation* is the happy story of this miracle. Beginning, as any true history of the country should begin, with an allusion to the traditional Flood and the first man Manu, it surveys the important landmarks *en route*—personalities and events, ideas and institutions—neglecting none, elaborating some, and presenting an outline that is compact and neat, complete and authentic.

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THE MAKING OF THE INDIAN NATION

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THE STORY OF ANCIENT INDIA

BUDDHISM AND ASOKA

ANCIENT INDIA—HISTORY AND CULTURE

THE MAKING OF THE INDIAN NATION

by

B. G. GOKHALE

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for

JAYASHRI

and

MAYA GOKHALE

PREFACE

IT IS NOT without some hesitation that the author offers the following pages to the readers. An account of the political and cultural evolution of the Indian nation through its millennia of history, compressed within the covers of a single volume, is an ambitious venture. The material dealing with the subject has been collected over the years of study and teaching in which the author found satisfaction and joy. The only justification for putting this material into print is his hope that perhaps his satisfaction and joy may be shared by others. A work like this necessarily assumes the form of a synoptic survey and can scarcely claim originality or profundity.

The author takes this opportunity of tendering his thanks to all those scholars and commentators of India's past on whose works he has so freely drawn. The author's contribution is mainly in the form of selection from and presentation of material on personalities, ideas, events and institutions which have gone into the making of the history of India.

Finally, the author would like to express his thanks to all those who have taken an interest in his work. Among these his students come first, for many of them, by their frequent inquiries, encouraged him to complete it. His thanks are also due to his wife, Dr. Beena Gokhale, for her constant help and criticism and to Prof. (Miss) Hamsa Shome, of Siddharth College, Bombay, for preparing the Index.

B. G. GOKHALE

Bombay
May 25, 1958

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Part One

PERSONALITIES AND EVENTS

THE SETTING

A HISTORY OF the Indian nation, in order to be properly intelligible, must be viewed in the perspective of the three distinct dimensions of space, time and the people. The spatial dimension of Indian history is vast, some 1,800,000 sq. miles. This land-mass is bounded by the Arabian Sea in the west and south-west and by the Bay of Bengal in the south-east. The north-west and north-east are bounded by the lofty mountain chain comprising the Suleiman and Kirthar ranges, the Hindu-kush, the Himalayas and the Naga, Lushai and Chin Hills. The north-western ranges separate India from Persia and Afghanistan beyond which lie the Middle Eastern and the Soviet worlds. The Himalayas are as much a part of Indian history as are Ashoka and Akbar. Sprawling over a distance of some 1500 miles and straddling, at their base, some 200 miles, the Himalayas evoke feelings of mystic wonder, gratitude and affection in the Indian mind. They are the sources of the eternal life-giving waters of the Ganges, the Indus and the Brahmaputra and the innumerable small rivers and rivulets which frisk their way into the plains of Hindusthan. They are the abodes of the gods and their lofty peaks stand as benign giants in white looking at the drama of life in the plains through the centuries. Beyond the hills of the north-east lie China and Burma stretching away into an infinitude of reminiscences, awe and friendly propinquity.

The country itself is divided into the north and the south by the central highlands of the Satpudas and the Vindhyas and these have channelled the direction of the movement of the peoples from the west to the east rather than from the north to the south. In these two areas the dominating regions have always

been the plains watered by the Ganges and the Cauvery. There are "two Indias, one of which may be described as Aryavarta, with its centre in the Gangetic Valley and the other the Deccan, extending from the Vindhyan region to the tip of the Peninsula. Racially, linguistically and politically these have remained separate. Their unity has been through culture, religion and a classical language, Sanskrit, which, though foreign in origin, became pre-eminently a national language shaping the mind of the people from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and moulding their thought and speech in a way which no other language has done." (K. M. Panikkar, *Geographical Factors in Indian History*, pp. 89-90.)

The mountains and seas have tended to isolate India from the rest of the world over periods of time. The vast distances which comprise the area of the country have tended to create several regional societies separated not only by geographical factors but also by differences in languages and customs. The constant problem before Indian history has been how to weld these diverse regional societies into a unified nation. A sense of nationalism fostered by the administrative and political unification brought about during the two centuries of foreign impact and domination seemed to offer the answer to this problem. Regional "nationalism" has been known in India and the sense of oneness felt by the Marathas and the Sikhs may be cited as examples of this regional or religious "patriotism". This may be compared to the nationalism of the French or the Germans, Belgians and the Dutch, Spaniards and the Hungarians in Europe for India has almost the same area as that of Europe without the Soviet Union. The miracle, however, has been that while Europe saw the growth of as many as 17 different nation-states India has finally evolved into a single nation.

The racial and religious variety in the Indian population is even more marked than in Europe. While Europe has been predominantly white and Christian (Protestant or Catholic) the racial shades of Indian history range from white to black and the differences between the various religious systems followed by the millions of India cannot be compared to the differences separating Catholicism from Protestantism. On the European analogy India could have been divided into as many

different nation-states as dot the European landscape, but this did not happen.

The most outstanding characteristic of the history of India during the last hundred years has been the emergence of Indian nationalism and nationhood in the place of the regional "patriotism" and statehood of the past. The unexpressed but vividly felt sense of cultural unity is now transformed into a political unity making itself manifest through the entity called the Indian nation that has emerged on the stage of human history. Mountains and plains, highlands and valleys, coastal areas and deserts have determined the contours of Indian history in which almost all the religions known to man have played a part. The conflict between geography and history which formed the core of Indian history so far has now been resolved.

CHAPTER ONE

FROM THE INDUS TO THE GANGES

I

IN THE INDIAN religious tradition the history of India commences with the story of the Flood and the first man Manu from whom proceed law and order in society. This tradition also speaks of several ages which preceded the present *Kali* age, an age of growing sin and godlessness. The chronicles trace the history of the country back to the ancient sages and heroes of myths and legends and though, in parts, these reflect some historical truth they are clearly of a genre which cannot be the stuff of sober history. Leaving aside these materials, therefore, we have to rely mainly on archaeological finds to reconstruct the chronicle of pre-historic India. These finds, though few in number, are of considerable value, indicating as they do the wide diffusion of pre-historic culture over a large area comprising Sind, Baluchistan, Gujarat and the Deccan.

But it is only with the Indus Valley civilization, which may be best described as the sudden offspring of opportunity and genius, that a somewhat detailed description of life in pre-historic India becomes possible. The discovery of this buried culture is one of the romances of Indian history. In 1922 an Indian archaeologist, Mr. Rakhaldas Bannerji, was examining the remains of a Buddhist *stupa* (a hemispherical brick mound enshrining the relics of the Buddha or those of his prominent disciples) of the Kushan age (1st-2nd centuries A.D.). During the course of his excavations Mr. Bannerji discovered some seals and bricks which unmistakably belonged to a far greater antiquity than the age of the *stupa* itself. Mr. Bannerji rightly recognized the importance of his finds and by 1930 the remains

of a buried city near Larkana in Sind were laid bare. This site is known as Mohenjo Daro (Mound of the Dead) and is coeval with another which lies at Harappa in the Montgomery district in the Punjab (now in Pakistan).

Of these two cities the one at Mohenjo Daro is better preserved, as Harappa suffered much from the depradations of brick-robbers. The evidence uncovered at Mohenjo Daro is so abundant and impressive that it is possible to reconstruct the whole sequence of the beginning, development and decay of this remarkable civilization. Both the cities were based on the irrigational and transportation facilities afforded by the two great rivers, the Indus and the Ravi. The distance separating the two is nearly 400 miles but the uniformity of the finds at both places is so striking that they are reasonably held to have belonged to the same culture. The city of Mohenjo Daro was well-planned and was served by an excellent system of drainage and roads, the two essentials of a busy metropolitan area. Its two main streets intersect at right angles and are joined by secondary streets and lanes. Their width ranges over from 9 to 34 feet and the course of one has been traced over half a mile. They were brick-lined and underneath them was placed the drainage with sump-pits and inspection-holes at regular intervals suggesting the existence of a regularly maintained sanitary staff. Every house had its own drains which efficiently controlled the disposal of waste. Of the buildings discovered three main types may be indicated. The first was the common dwelling house, often two-storied, with the entrance opening into the side-lane and with few windows. They are spacious and comfortable with living rooms, bedrooms, kitchens and bathrooms. Many of them had a well adjoining them and water-supply seems to have been plentiful. They are built of brick, both burnt and crude, and have little or no decoration. The other buildings are the "Great Bath" and the "barrack-like structures". The Great Bath is a vast hydropathic establishment with the pool admeasuring 39 ft. by 23 ft. by 8 ft. which compares favourably with many of such modern establishments. On its four sides there are verandahs and at the back of three of the verandahs there are galleries and rooms while on one side—the south—there is a large gallery with a small

chamber in each corner. The whole structure is built of bricks and there is evidence to believe that the pool was periodically emptied and cleaned. The purpose of the structure appears to have been religious, suggesting that bathing had a ritual significance in the life and religion of the people.

The other structure is "marshalled like a military cantonment" with a group of cottages, sixteen in number, each 20 ft. by 12 ft. on the inside and divided into two rooms, one twice the size of the other. They are arranged in two parallel rows, with a narrow lane on one side and a street on the other. Nearby are carefully built circular working-floors suggesting a corn-mill worked by a large labour force.

Among the makers of this civilization at least three racial types are indicated by the skeletal evidence discovered at the site. These are the proto-Australoid, the Mediterranean and the Alpinoid. There are also traces of the Mongoloid type who appears as an itinerant stranger frequenting the city for trade. This type may have come from the Himalayan region. The Mediterranean contributed the agricultural and urban features and with this was also associated the Alpinoid while the proto-Australoid formed the masses of the people. A certain degree of social stratification may have been present, suggesting the possibility of the latter-day Indian caste-system going back to this pre-Aryan age. The existence of slavery may also be assumed.

This was an urban-commercial civilization the wealth of which was gathered as much from the harvests in the fields as from the wares in the market-places. The representation of ships on some seals and the finding of Indus Valley ware in pre-dynastic Egypt suggest that these people had trade contacts with the maritime Middle Eastern world while the location of similar sites over a large area in the country itself leads one to conclude that this civilization covered a wide radius over which its influences were felt.

Of their religion we have very suggestive evidence from the finds. The religion practised here was certainly well-developed with a maturity of symbolism and ritual behind it and seems to have been served by a priesthood. The most striking aspects of their religion are the cults of the Mother-Goddess and that of a deity so appropriately described as the "proto-historic

Shiva". Several figurines of the Mother-Goddess have been discovered and they fall into two well-defined types. The first is that of a benevolent deity, the protector of children, the presiding deity at conception and the deity of fertility. The other is manifestly malevolent resembling the goddess Kali of later-day Hinduism. The male god is shown seated on a low throne surrounded by wild animals, clearly reminding us of one of the appellations of Shiva, namely, *Pashupati*, the lord of wild beasts. He is also a *yogi*, an ascetic, in which respect also he comes very close to the historical Shiva from which it is apparent that Shiva is a non-Aryan and pre-Aryan contribution to Indian religion. There is some evidence of phallic worship while of the other aspects of this religion the worship of certain animals regarded as sacred, the worship of trees and plants and of water may be mentioned. There is no evidence of temples though the Great Bath has an obviously religious character.

Of their material culture a few remarks may be offered. In the matter of food, such grains as bread-wheat, barley, sesamum, peas and *rai* were the principal crops, and the larder was further enriched with beef, meat, pork, poultry, fish and turtle. The animals known and put to domestic use were the humped bull, the domestic buffalo, goat, sheep, pig, dog, ass, horse, elephant and camel. There is little direct evidence of the styles of wearing apparel though the statuary gives some idea of them. The dress consisted of two long strips of cloth; one was used to cover the shoulders and the other was draped round the lower part of the body. Wearing of whiskers and beards was quite a fashion but the upper lip was kept clean shaven. The womenfolk used a variety of ornaments like necklaces, armlets, bracelets and bangles and the materials used in their making ranged from gold to copper, beads, shells, and terracotta.

The period in which this civilization flourished can be fixed with some degree of definiteness. As many as seven layers have been found in the building of the city and this may be explained by the assumption that the deposit of riverine mud all around lowered the level of the ground on which the city stood with the consequent danger of flooding. In course of

time, therefore, the ground floor became the cellar and stories were added as the situation made them necessary. Counting this stratigraphically we may fix the period between 3500 B.C. and 2500 B.C. as the most likely one during which this civilization flourished. The method of its destruction, desertion and burial, may be surmised from the traces of invasion, fire and flood. The city was attacked by some unknown barbarian tribes and the population fled. Some of them were caught and killed as they were trying to escape and then incendiarism accounted for the rest. After a time the Indus inundated the grounds and the wind and dust from neighbouring areas did the rest of the work. But if the city was destroyed its culture was not utterly lost. That it made significant contributions to the making of Hinduism is obvious and Hinduism can scarcely be comprehensible unless examined in the context of pre-Aryan contributions.

II

The next phase of Indian history begins with the Aryan invasion of India. The coming of the Aryans was an event of epochal significance not only in the history of India and Persia but also of Europe. The original home of the Aryans cannot be definitely ascertained today but the most likely suggestion is that referring to South Russia. From here began the grand migration which so profoundly influenced the course of events in two continents. En route the horde split into two, one of the groups going westwards and the other arriving in India via Persia. Some from this group settled in Persia while the others advanced into India. Their coming into India and settling in the Punjab must have taken centuries. Their earliest record, the *Rig Veda*, gives us glimpses into this process of settlement of the Aryans in their new Indian home. It was a process far from peaceful for they had to wage constant war with the indigenous population who contested every mile of their advance. But the Aryans proved themselves to be superior and defeated and enslaved many of the aborigines. In the lands thus cleared they settled down in tribal groups ruled over by hereditary kings. The *Rig Veda*,

their book of prayers containing over a thousand hymns in ten sections, refers to a number of tribes. The most important political event reported in this book is the Battle of the Ten Kings, and the names of Divodasa and Sudasa are frequently mentioned. The immediate cause of the war was the priestly rivalry between Vasishtha and Vishwamitra. Already we are introduced to a well-developed priesthood, which is by no means hereditary yet so necessary for the complicated ritual of sacrifice. The Aryans worshipped as many as 33 gods who were personifications of natural phenomena and the mode of worship was that of animal sacrifice and offering of milk and grain and Soma—a plant brought over long distances and used for the decoction of a very potent drink. But the Aryan mind has already advanced far beyond the stage of simple polytheism for there is the significant mention of a cosmic law — *Rita* — to the ordinances of which even the gods are subject. The most prominent gods are Varuna, the god of Thunder but also of morality, Indra, the war-god, and Agni, the fire-god. In all this galaxy there is only one female deity, Ushas, the goddess of dawn, who occupies a somewhat minor position.

The landscape is dominated by the wide and rolling plains of the Punjab and, though close to the sea, the Aryans knew little of the mysteries of the sea. The economy is still rural-agricultural-pastoral for the city has no place in the Aryan scheme of things. The smallest unit of organization was the stockaded village where lived a number of patriarchal families constituting a *Vish* or canton. Several such *vishas* made a tribe and five major tribes made the early Indo-Aryan nation. The two frequently mentioned organizations of a social-political character were the *sabha* and the *samiti* but the exact position of either is difficult to determine. Of the later caste-system we have little or no evidence. There were three broad social groupings of priests, warriors and artisan-agriculturists but the barriers separating them were neither insurmountable nor constant. The only group that was fixed in its social implications was that of the non-Aryan slaves, the "black folk", flat-nosed, of harsh or unintelligible speech, not worshipping Aryan gods but honouring naked (?) gods. As

slaves they were the proverbial hewers of wood and drawers of water, living on the periphery of the Aryan society without any rights but with manifold tasks.

The Aryans lived a life of adventure, war, song and frolic, full of hopes and aspirations. Gambling was a common vice and drink enlivened many a gathering. Child-marriage was unknown and widow-remarriage common. Beef was not yet taboo though the economic importance of kine was beginning to be appreciated. Music and dance, convivial gathering and the pleasures and penalties of the dice are very often subjects of homilies in the hymns of the *Rig Veda* which show a life far different from that of later times.

But already the transition was under way. Ritual was getting too complicated for the layman. The cult of sacrifice was being subjected to a process of a mystical interpretation and it was inevitable, under the circumstances, that a well-organized and ambitious group of professional priests would come forward to claim a privileged position. This is what we find in the *Brahmanas,* the liturgical texts, and the *Aranyakas,* texts purporting to offer a mystical interpretation of the cult of sacrifice. But the inevitable revolt came with the *Upanishads* which reflect almost a revolution in Indian thinking. These texts breathe a different air and expound the revolutionary theories of *Atman* (the individual soul) and *Brahman* (the Cosmic Soul) which are far different from the boring texts of the *Brahmanas.* Of their contents we will have occasion to speak later.

Between 1500 B.C. when the *Rig Veda* was finally put together, and 700 B.C. the Aryans were spreading their influence and power into inner India. In this process they encountered a culture firmly rooted in the popular mind. This was the pre-Aryan culture, and the battle-ground was the region between Delhi and Bihar. The tribal group was becoming a geographical society and the image of this society, monarchical and "heroic", is to be seen in the two great epics of India, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana.* These epics reflect the process of the Aryanization of India on the one hand and that of "Indianization" of the Aryans on the other. Of the two the *Mahabharata* may be described as the "popular" epic

while the *Ramayana* may well claim to be the "classical" epic. Though the authorship of the *Mahabharata* is ascribed to Vyasa it is undoubtedly the work of generations of poets and poetasters, undergoing several revisions during the centuries of its growth. In mass it is larger than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* combined and is a story of mighty adventure, war and destruction spiced with obvious moralising. Its central theme is the fratricidal war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, scions of the house of the Bharatas, leading to total destruction of the two contending factions. The Bharatas, an old *Vedic* tribe, are now settled in the area extending from the Saraswati to the Ganges with their capital at Hastinapura, near modern Meerut in Uttar Pradesh. The war was fought on the battle-field of Kurukshetra-Panipat in which the Kauravas were utterly ruined and the Pandavas won only a Pyrrhic victory and the story ends with a description of their journey to heaven. Incidentally, the famous *Bhagavadgita*, forms a part of the epic.

Though the epic received its final form only during 200 B.C.-A.D. 200 its core goes back to a much older antiquity. The war must have been fought some time between 1000 B.C. and 900 B.C. and the civilization depicted in its pages is still primarily rural-agricultural. But there is a perceptible growth of the idea of property-relationships, and land along with cattle now becomes a form of personal wealth and the landowner, the greatest of whom is the king himself, becomes the hero of the age. The epic pictures the "heroic" age wherein the battle-field becomes a normal institution and chivalry and valour the obvious virtues.

In distinction to the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* may indeed be called the "classical" epic. In its form it is much more unified and in its style it is a precursor of the works in classical Sanskrit. It narrates the story of Rama, his exile, the abduction of his wife Sita by the demon king of Lanka (Ceylon) and her recovery after a fierce battle. Rama is the son of king Dasharatha of Ayodhya and the epic reflects the social and economic ethos of the heroic age. It places before its readers the ideals of kingship and womanhood, of truth, beauty and goodness. These ideals have been the living

thoughts of countless generations of people in the country and in its popularity the *Ramayana* is a formidable rival to the *Mahabharata*. Through the ages it has been translated into the dozens of languages and dialects of India and a number of explanatory works on its grand theme exist. Rama, the hero, soon became an *avatara*, an incarnation of God, and alongside of Krishna is worshipped in innumerable temples and homes in India. His worship is a part of the *Bhakti* cult — the cult of personal devotion to God — and with it he has become one of the most important members of the Hindu pantheon.

As we approach the 7th century B.C. we almost come to the historical period. At this time Janaka ruled in Videha and he was famous both as a philosopher-king and as a patron of learning and culture. His capital Mithila is identified with the town of Janakpur on the Indo-Nepal border. The centre of political and cultural activity now shifts to Magadha, where after the initial conflict, the Aryan-non-Aryan cultural synthesis was in the making. The essential "Indianness" with which we have to reckon in the later centuries was coming into being. This was the age of such great prophets as Gautama the Buddha and Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, who renounced the worldly life to seek salvation and having found it preached their message of earnest ethical effort and the primacy of reason in a good life to the masses. This was also the age when the philosophical quest of the *Upanishads* was nearing completion and theories which were going to revolutionize Indian religions were being boldly offered to the thinking people as an alternative to the complicated and unsatisfying ritualism of an earlier age. These were the theories of *Atman*, the eternal, unchanging, imperishable individual soul, and *Brahman*, the all-pervasive eternal Cosmic Soul.

In economic life, too, there were coming into being great changes. In the Buddhist and Jain texts the *Karshapana*, a square copper coin of the punch-marked variety, is frequently mentioned. Prices are quoted in terms of money which slowly replaced the system of barter of the earlier age. Now along with the feudal lord, owning large acres of fertile land or large herds of cattle, we hear of the great bankers and merchants

driving their long caravans all over the country. The literature of the period makes of the banker and merchant its emergent hero and the teachings emphasising the relative unimportance of caste in the measure of a man find increasing acceptance from these new classes thrown up by the emergent money-economy. We also hear of the powerful guilds of artisans and the signs are unmistakable that the long neglected *vaishya* (member of the merchant-artisan class) has arrived on the social scene ready to demand his place in it. The period is of a profound intellectual and economic revolution throwing up its own challenges to the norms of the existing order and being ready to propose its own solutions to the problems of the age.

A parallel and equally significant change in the pattern of political organization may also be noticed. In the sphere of political organization there is an unmistakable tendency towards the establishment of an empire with its hierarchy of trained bureaucrats and large standing armies far different from their counterparts of old. The earlier texts speak of 16 different kingdoms and republics many of which soon disappear from the scene either due to conquest or by merging with neighbouring territorial powers. In this process of imperial unification Magadha takes the lead and its strides soon cover Koshala, Amga, Avanti and many other kingdoms. Magadha may be identified with the Patna and Gaya districts of south Bihar and its capital was at Rajagriha. Here ruled Bimbisara for 52 years, a wise ruler and a friend and devotee of the Buddha. During his time Magadha embarked on the imperial march which was to seek its ultimate destiny with the rise of Chandragupta Maurya in 326 B.C. His son Ajatashatru, a parricide, continues this policy of imperial expansion and though dynastic revolutions bring the Shishunagas and Nandas in uneasy succession on the political stage, the drive of Magadha becomes irresistible.

But if Magadha rises to assume an imperial leadership in "middle" India the far north suffers a different kind of fate. The rise of Persia under Darius I (522-486 B.C.) results in extending the frontiers of the nascent Persian empire far and wide and the Indus region is now made the 20th and richest

satrapy of this empire, paying 360 talents of gold dust (equivalent to £ 3 million) as annual tribute. The Persian rule in India continued through the time of Xerxes (486-465 B.C.) and came to an end with the destruction of the empire itself by Alexander the Great. The two centuries of Persian rule in India, though politically only of marginal interest, were culturally of considerable significance. The introduction of the Kharoshti script (a branch of the Aramic), court customs and manners and its influences on Indian art are some of its aspects.

In the last quarter of the 4th century B.C. India was brought into her first historical contact with the western world. This was when Alexander led his Macedonian horsemen into the Punjab in 326 B.C. What Alexander aimed at was no sporadic raid. He had shaken the Persian empire to its foundations and before him, in the Punjab, sprawled a motley crowd of mutually hostile states and principalities. The terrain leading into India was difficult but with hard fighting and skilful manoeuvring Alexander established strong outposts and garrisons on the route. Some time between December 327 B.C. and January 326 B.C. the Greek army crossed through the Khyber pass and descended on the Indus. Shortly before this Ambhi, the Raja of Taxila, promised the invader aid driven by his fear and hatred of his rival Porus who ruled over the territory flanked by the Jhelum and the Ravi. Alexander had now a battle-tested army of 30,000 men augmented by mercenaries from Persia, the Hindukush region and Central Asia. This army was divided into two groups. One was led by Hephaeston and Perdicas moving along the south bank of the Kabul and emerging into the plains of Peshawar where it defeated the Indian king Ashtakaraja of Pushkalavati who was killed after a brave fight. The other group was led by Alexander himself and was engaged in fighting the turbulent people of the hills. But the most serious challenge came from Porus who awaited the Greek invader with a formidable 30,000-strong infantry, 4,000-strong cavalry, 300 chariots and 200 war-elephants. Just before the engagement it rained and the ground became slippery. The Greeks made a masterly use of their cavalry and charged the Indians, throwing them into utter confusion. The elephants now became a tragic liability and there was much

slaughter. Porus himself was seriously wounded and taken prisoner but treated with consideration and honour by the victor. Alexander had won an important victory and planned to march forward. After some more fighting his soldiers began to show the strain of war-weariness and demanded that they be led back to their homes. With a heavy heart Alexander made all preparations for a march-back in the year 325 B.C. Two years later the great general and conqueror died in Babylon. But even before the news of his death had travelled to India the people he had conquered rose in revolt.

Alexander had come and gone. His invasion of India was a spectacular feat of inspired leadership and rare military ability. But what was its significance in the history of India? Politically it was like a storm that pulls down trees and leaves rubble behind. It destroyed the small kingdoms and petty principalities in the north-west and thus created a vacuum which could later be easily filled by a Chandragupta. Culturally the results were far-reaching. It left behind many Greek settlements in India which became the foci for radiating Greek influences in the country. This Indo-Greek cultural contact produced many interesting results and a bridge was thus built between the east and the west.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AGE OF EMPIRES

I

WITH THE YEAR 326 B.C. India entered the age of historical certitude and imperial unity. The identification of the Sandracottus of the Greek annals with Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Maurya dynasty, led to the recognition of the first firm date in Indian history and this became the starting point of a system of historically valid chronology. The discovery of the *Arthashastra*, the treatise on the science of polity by Kautilya (also known as Chanakya), who is commonly believed to have been actively associated with Chandragupta Maurya, and the decipherment of the Inscriptions of Chandragupta's grandson, Ashoka, have provided ample material for a somewhat detailed history of political and cultural events in India of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., a luxury comparatively unknown in earlier periods. The observations of Megasthenes as quoted in the writings of the Greek Classical writers, confirm and supplement much of this information and hence what the historian may present is no longer of the genre of conjecture and guess-work. It is also with this period that a history of India as a whole becomes possible for the Maurya empire covered almost the whole of India.

II

Of the early life of Chandragupta the Buddhist chronicles relate that he was the posthumous son of a petty chieftain who was killed in war. His mother had to flee to the forests and there the infant was given over to a family of cowherds. In

sylvan surroundings Chandragupta grew into early adolescence and it was here that he was discovered by a Brahmin named Chanakya or Kautilya. Chanakya was fleeing the capital Pataliputra wither he had gone in search of recognition of his erudition. He was a native of Taxila in the north-west and in Pataliputra he had roused the anger of his host, Dhana Nanda, by uttering a terrible curse on the dynasty. The imperial guards pursued him and Kautilya could escape only in disguise and furtive travel. His meeting with Chandragupta was an event of far-reaching historic significance for the partnership which began then continued throughout the life of the future emperor. From the forest the pair went back to Taxila where Kautilya arranged for the education of the youth. At this time the Punjab was seething with revolt and in the defeated armies of the kings and republics of the area by Alexander there was excellent material for the formation of an army. To this task Chandragupta and Kautilya soon addressed themselves. The Nanda king, though rich and powerful, was despised by his subjects and Chandragupta felt that the time was opportune for striking a blow against the Nandas with an easy and sure prospect of a speedy victory. But enthusiasm seems to have outweighed the counsels of caution and in the first attempt Chandragupta was routed. In the second attempt he went about reducing the territories under Nanda rule systematically and the climax was reached when the rebel army attacked and stormed the capital of Pataliputra. Dhana Nanda was put to the sword, and a new dynasty was enthroned in the ancient imperial seat.

For a few years after this event, in 322 B.C., Chandragupta was busy consolidating his own position and annexing large areas. His power was seriously threatened when, in 304 B.C. Seleucos Nicator, a general of Philip of Macedon, invaded India from the north-west, obviously in imitation of Alexander the Great. But this time a totally different situation confronted the Greek invader for in an indecisive engagement Seleucos was told in no unmistakable terms that in Chandragupta he had to reckon with a powerful adversary. The hostilities were concluded with a treaty by which Seleucos ceded to the Maurya four rich satrapies in return for 500 war-elephants badly

needed by the Greek for his own impending war against his compatriots elsewhere. The four ceded satrapies were Kandahar, Kabul, Herat and Baluchistan and the inclusion of this area pushed the frontiers of the Maurya empire far beyond the limits of the British empire of later times. The new alliance, it appears, was further strengthened by Chandragupta's marrying a daughter of Seleucos Nicator, and by the arrival of the envoy, Megasthenes, at Pataliputra.

Chandragupta has been rightly described as the first historical emperor of India. From his rich and populous capital he ruled over a vast empire which stretched from Kabul in the north-west to Mysore in the south and from Saurashtra in the west to Assam in the east. For the first time in the history of the country there was power, the strength of which could be felt all over the land and by which the multiplicity of kingdoms and principalities was transformed into the unity of an imperial state.

The administration of such a large empire raised intricate problems demanding the highest wisdom and tact. In this work, it is assumed, Chandragupta implemented many of the ideas of Kautilya though the work, *Arthashastra,* does not envisage an imperial administration but has a much smaller unit in view. Faced with the problem of maintaining a large empire based on primitive means of communications the Maurya empire became a finely wrought balance of power whereby a maximum centralization of authority was paralleled by a large measure of devolution of power in the provinces, districts and villages, the units of imperial administration. Over the provinces ruled the viceroys who were often princes of the imperial family. The smallest unit was the immemorial village with its own village government in the work of which the central authority participated through the headman who collected revenue and maintained law and order. To maintain close contacts with the officers on the one hand and the people on the other the Mauryas made an extensive use of reporters, agents and spies who kept the emperor constantly informed on all matters of importance to the state.

The emperor took personal interest in the business of the

state and tried cases referred to him by the lower authorities, civil and judicial. Having come to power by violence Chandragupta feared intrigue and elaborate precautions were taken to guard his person. The public appearances of the emperor were occasions of great pomp and pageantry. He drove in state to the "Hall of Justice" and his hunting excursions became, in effect, a vast spectacle of royal grandeur. The imperial palace was an imposing building set in extensive parks and gardens sheltering all manner of birds and animals.

The capital, Pataliputra, was located at the confluence of the two rivers, the Ganges and the Shon. It was nine-and-a-half miles in length and a mile in width and was surrounded on all sides by a huge wall with 64 gates and 570 towers. The fortifications were among the strongest in the world. The administration of this premier city was entrusted to 30 dignitaries who served on six boards having five members on each board. Board I looked after the promotion of the industrial arts. Board II concerned itself with the care of the foreigners in the city. The fact that a special board of foreigners had to be set up indicates a large influx of foreigners at that time. Megasthenes says : "To these they assign lodgings, and they keep watch over their modes of life by means of those persons whom they give to them for assistance. They escort them on the way when they leave the country, or, in the event of their dying, forward their property to their relatives. They take care of them when they are sick, and if they die, bury them." The work of Board III was to record vital statistics relating to population, births and deaths, both as a means of general information and as a means of efficient taxation. Board IV was in charge of trade and commerce and Board V supervised "manufactured articles, which they sell by public notice. What is new is sold separately from what is old and there is a fine for mixing the two together." Board VI collected the tithes of sales, i.e., one-tenth of the price of the articles sold.

The backbone of the empire was the large and efficient army maintained by the Mauryas. The standing army numbered 600,000 men who were paid regular salaries. Military administration was organized through six boards with five members on each board. These were the departments of the

navy, infantry, cavalry, war-chariots, elephants and supply. Chandragupta, a warrior of no mean achievements himself, took great personal interest in the care and efficiency of the army and its strength was amply demonstrated to Seleucos when he invaded India. The Maurya state was highly bureaucratic and the hierarchy of officials working for it offers striking resemblance to governmental work in modern days.

Of the life of the people Megasthenes says: "The inhabitants, in like manner, having abundant means of subsistence, exceed in consequence the ordinary stature, and are distinguished by their proud bearing. They are also found to be well-skilled in the arts, as might be expected of men who inhale a pure air and drink the very finest water. And while the soil bears on its surface all kinds of fruits which are known to cultivation, it has also, underground, numerous veins of all sorts of metals, for it contains much gold and silver, and copper and iron in no small quantity, and even tin and other metals, which are employed in making articles of use and ornament, as well as the implements and accoutrements of war." The rich citizens dressed in "flowered muslins embroidered with jewels, and an umbrella was carried by an attendant behind the head of the noble when he went into the roads". The poor people wore fillets and turbans on their long hair and dressed in robes of plain white muslin or linen. The people enjoyed a high reputation for honesty and cases of theft were exceedingly few. This may have been due as much to the prosperity of the country as to the efficient police and penal system.

In such prosperity and pageantry ruled Chandragupta for 24 eventful years, from 322 B.C. to 298 B.C. As he grew old he became very religious, and the Jain tradition asserts that he abdicated and followed the saint Bhadrabahu to the south where he ended his days in the manner of an ascetic.

Perhaps no other Indian ruler, with the exception of Akbar in the 16th century A.D., could claim such magnificient achievements as this founder of the Maurya dynasty. Raised as an orphan, he owed all his success to his own character and ability and to the help and guidance of his friend, philosopher and guide. He was as great as an administrator as he was a mighty warrior. Under his vigorous rule, peace reigned through-

out the empire and prosperity characterized the life of the people. Out of a dream and a vow he and Chanakya created a mighty empire. His justice was tempered with sympathy and if he lived in pomp and splendour he fully justified his claims to them.

III

The successor of Chandragupta was his son Bindusara whose long reign of 25 years was almost completely devoid of any spectacular or memorable events. He is also known as Amitraghata, which may have been his title. It means "slayer of foes" but we do not know anything about the foes supposedly slain by him. The contact with the Greek world which began with Chandragupta was maintained now by Daimachos and there is an incident reported about Bindusara's request to Antiochus of Syria to buy and send him sweet wine, figs and a philosopher, a strange assortment! Antiochus consented to send the first two but politely pleaded his inability to comply with the third request as the laws of Greece forbade the purchase of philosophers. The only event of political significance associated with this reign was the revolt at Taxila which was put down by his son Ashoka. The cause of this revolt was the oppressive behaviour of the officials and in this we already see the arbitrariness and vagaries of the Mauryan officialdom.

Bindusara died in 273 B.C. leaving behind him the large empire which he had inherited from his illustrious father. The Buddhist chronicles would have us believe that there was a war of succession in which Ashoka killed all his brothers save one—and the number of brothers is stated to be 100—and waded through a sea of fraternal blood to the ancestral throne. This story is obviously inspired by a desire to present a sharp contrast in the character of Ashoka before and after his conversion to Buddhism. But there is some reason to suppose that there was an interval of four years between Ashoka's accession and coronation and these two events may be placed in 273 and 269 B.C. respectively.

Of Ashoka's early life we only know that he served as a

viceroy in central India at Vidisha where he married a lady named Devi. Of this union were born Mahendra and Sanghamitra; the former became a Buddhist monk and the latter joined the order of nuns and both went to Ceylon as Buddhist missionaries. At least for the first eight years after his accession Ashoka did nothing unusual. He liked good food, often went hunting and took great interest in gardening and his horses. But in 261 B.C. the province of Kalinga—modern Orissa—rose in revolt. This was promptly crushed and with great slaughter. But it had an extraordinary effect on the mind of Ashoka and it became a turning point in his life. The sight of the captives effectively quenched his aggressive ambitions, for the maimed ones his heart bled, and from the dead a new king was born. Never before in the history of humanity, nor ever afterwards, has a king publicly expressed genuine grief for a deed commonly regarded as the legitimate business of kings. The war of Kalinga was the first and the last war waged by Ashoka and the sword that he sheathed then was never unsheathed again. From that time on for Ashoka the drums sounded only to preach the truth. The promising warrior had been transformed into a practising evangelist.

At this point the thirty-odd inscriptions, graven on rocks and pillars, become documents of great human interest. Very probably the text of these inscriptions was prepared by the Emperor himself, and through their archaic words they certainly convey the impression of a personal confession of a great soul in anguish and in hope. They are located at all prominent points on the frontiers and central areas of the empire and were obviously meant to be read by the people. Through them the voice of Ashoka comes to us across the centuries, so ancient yet so familiar. With characteristic candour Ashoka tells us as much of his culinary preferences as of his ethical ideas. Soon after the Kalinga war Ashoka turned to Buddhism, though for some time he was not as enthusiastic in the practice of his faith as he should have been. But that phase soon ended and as the years matured into decades, his faith became firm and his enthusiasm for practising and preaching it unbounded. He undertook the customary pilgrimages to the holy places of Buddhism and interested himself in the affairs of the Buddhist

order of monks and nuns. He is reputed to have built numerous stupas and the Buddhist tradition avers that the Third Great Synod was held in the 17th year of his reign.

But Ashoka was no bigot for he never forgot that he was a king ruling over subjects who professed different faiths. In this he was truly catholic, for, with remarkable impartiality he distributed his patronage to Brahmins, Buddhists and Jains alike. Indeed, he sternly disapproved of the all-too-human weakness of extolling one's own faith and speaking disparagingly of the faith of others. He had little patience with meaningless ritual and regarded with abhorrence the practice of immolating animals as sacrificial victims. He banned the slaughter of many different kinds of animals and birds and disapproved of those public fairs at which there was much drinking and licentiousness. In his capacity as the temporal head of India he preached a simple creed of commonly accepted morals and endeavoured to bring humanity in the place of cruelty, ethical earnestness in the place of empty form. He commended good behaviour within the family and without and exhorted his subjects to act in such wise as to be ever mindful of the hereafter.

Of his positive undertakings the most prominent may be mentioned here. What Ashoka strove to establish was nothing less than the welfare state dedicated to righteousness. He had roads built and had shade-giving trees planted along them ; he established rest-houses and set up hospitals for men and animals. In this he was far ahead of his times for the earliest hospital in Europe does not appear before the tenth century A.D. He had medicinal herbs planted and, in order to ensure that his policies were properly implemented, created a new cadre of officers called the " morality officers " whose task it was to carry out his beneficial policies and act in the best interests of the people. Ashoka strongly disapproved of sectarian rivalries and it was also the duty of these officers to see that all the sects lived in peace and amity with each other.

Having worked with zeal for the moral uplift of his own people Ashoka wanted his contemporary kings in foreign lands to know what he was doing. He sent envoys to the border peoples in India and also to the kings of the Middle Eastern and Hellenistic worlds. He mentions Antiochus II, Theos of

Syria (261-246 B.C.), Ptolemy II, Philadelphos of Egypt, Antogonas Gonatas of Macedonia (278-239 B.C.), Magus of Cyraene (300-250 B.C.) and Alexander of Epirus (272-258 B.C.) as the kings to whom he sent his missions. At this time the Buddhist Order also sent its own missions to the Himalayan region, to western India and to the lands beyond the seas and thus the joint efforts of the Buddhist Order and Ashoka helped Buddhism develop from a small sect into a national and international religion claiming the allegiance of millions of people. His forefathers had built an empire that embraced the most diverse races and cultures in the country and Ashoka gave it the spiritual meaning that transcended the narrow limitations of caste and region, priesthood and ritual, in the hope that it would endure as the kingdom of righteousness so long as the sun and the moon shone on this earth of ours.

Ashoka's contribution to Indian history does not stop at religion and morals alone. In the field of art he is the originator of a great tradition in sculpture. His pillars are examples of the highest art of the stone-cutter and indeed, before his period, the history of Indian art is "philologically a blank page" and "archaeologically an empty show-case". The history of Indian art begins with Ashoka and with him it reveals a maturity of idealism and technical skill. Incidentally, his Sarnath capital is now used as the State seal of the Government of India and the Buddhist Wheel, popularised by this art, adorns the Indian national flag.

But this rich life, it seems, had a sad end. The Buddhist books tell us that the great emperor bestowed all that he had in charity and at last he possessed nothing save a fruit which also he promptly gifted away! There is reason to suppose that in his old age Ashoka's work was obstructed and perhaps he had to suffer humiliation at the hands of his heirs and ministers. But he had done more than any other potentate in human history had dared dream and when death came, in *circa* 236 B.C., Ashoka had no regrets.

Such was Ashoka, the greatest of kings. H. G. Wells has paid a well-deserved tribute to him in the following words: "Amidst the tens of thousands of names that crowd the

columns of history, their Majesties and Graciousnesses and Serenities and Royal Highnesses and the like, the name of Ashoka shines, and shines almost alone as a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne." Born a king Ashoka became an evangelist ; where others were content to conquer and rule, Ashoka chose to conquer himself and build the Kingdom of the True, the Good and the Beautiful in the hearts of men.

IV

With the death of Ashoka began the collapse of the mighty Maurya empire. Of his four sons only one, Jaluka, ruled and that too in the territory covered by the present state of Kashmir. Kunala was blinded by his step-mother, Mahendra joined the Buddhist Order of monks and went to Ceylon as a missionary, and Tivara did the same. We know of his grandson, Dasharatha, from an inscription in the Barabar caves while Jain tradition speaks of a Samparati. It is almost futile to try and bring some order in the narrative after Ashoka's death. The last of the Mauryas was Brihadratha who was assassinated by his Brahmin general, Pushyamitra Shunga, later the founder of the Shunga dynasty, in 187 B.C.

What were the causes leading to the disintegration of the Maurya empire ? Some historians have blamed Ashoka for it arguing that his "Buddhist" policy led to a Brahmanical counter-revolution. This contains some truth though it cannot be accepted as the whole explanation. It is possible that the Brahmanical priesthood saw deep affront in the "Buddhist" policies of Ashoka and the rise of the Brahmin Shungas lends some credence to this view. Brahmanism saw in Buddhism a system of thought and practice, which, if allowed to flourish, would cut the very ground from under the feet of the priests by insisting on the equality of all men. But the most probable reasons must be sought in the very constitution of the Maurya empire itself. Like all other empires of anti-

quity, the Maurya empire depended for its continued life on the personality of the ruler. The successors of Ashoka clearly did not display that combination of strength and tact so necessary for the continued existence of the empire. It is also possible to argue that the weakness of the successors of Ashoka was paralleled by a growth in the oppressive proclivities of the bureaucracy against which popular revolt was the only redress. We have already referred to a revolt at Taxila during the time of Bindusara. Ashoka in his inscriptions gives us an indication that he too was apprehensive of the abuse of power by his officials and to counteract this he instituted three- and five-yearly inspections. Finally, a weak central authority invariably encouraged revolts by provincial and regional chiefs to set themselves up as independent rulers. The process of disintegration was further speeded by a Greek invasion led by Demetrios.

To understand this invasion we have to go back to 250 B.C. to connect the sequence of events leading to it. About this time Parthia and Bactria, the two important parts of the Seleucid empire, revolted against the sovereign, Antiochus II, Theos (261-246 B.C.). Subsequently Antiochus III compelled Euthydemos, the independent ruler of Bactria, to come to terms. Demetrios, the son of Euthydemos, invaded India. Another personality of consequence in the history of this period is Menander —the Milinda of the Pali-Buddhist book *Questions of King Milinda,* which informs us that he finally became a convert to Buddhism after his conversations with the Buddhist sage Nagasena. The Greek armies marched through the Punjab and attacked the important cities of middle India, finally threatening Pataliputra. But there were disturbances in the home provinces of the invader and consequently the invasion had to be called off. Of Menander the Buddhist book says that he was a powerful ruler, and this is confirmed by the finds of his coins not only in the valleys of the Kabul and the Indus but also in Uttar Pradesh and Saurashtra. The invasion of Demetrios is placed around 175 B.C., with Menander as his successor ruling in the first century B.C. But the whole sequence of events is chronologically very uncertain.

The last of the Mauryas was killed by his Brahmin general

Pushyamitra Shunga who became the founder of the Shunga dynasty which held sway over what remained of the Maurya empire till 67 B.C. The reign of Pushyamitra was long (187-157 B.C.) and eventful. He had to face a Greek invasion, presumably led by Demetrios, and another by Kharavela, the king of Kalinga. Information about this second invasion comes from the Hathigumpha inscription which presents a somewhat detailed history of the early career and cultural and war-like activities of Kharavela. Kharavela was a devout Jain but this did not prevent him from waging successful wars both in Magadha and the west. He is described as a great patron of learning and a great builder.

Pushyamitra performed two horse-sacrifices and the Buddhist tradition charges him with persecution of the Buddhists. It was during this period of Brahmanical revival that the law book of Manu was put in its final shape and the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were "Brahmanized". The law book displays special ire against the Shudras and breathes a thoroughly illiberal spirit. At this time also lived Patanjali, the author of the Great Commentary on the ancient Sanskrit grammar of Panini.

The son and successor of Pushyamitra was Agnimitra who ruled as king of Vidisha for long before he became the sovereign of Magadha. He figures more as an amorous hero than a great ruler and is the central figure in the drama *Malavikagnimitra* by the celebrated Sanskrit poet Kalidasa. Malavika, whom Agnimitra marries in the end, is a princess of Vidarbha living in disguise at the court in Vidisha.

The rest of the Shungas, eight of them, are of little importance. Of them Bhagabhadra is mentioned in the Garuda-column inscription of Heliodorus, an emissary from the court of Antialcidas. The column stands at Besnagar in central India and records the conversion of the Greek to the Vaishnava faith. Vaishnavism now became a cult of devotion to a personal God with a numerous following and had spread all over northern and western India. The last of the Shungas was Devabhumi who was assassinated by his Brahmin minister Vasudeva Kanva in *c.* 75 B.C. The Kanva dynasty ruled till *c.* 30 B.C. and after it the independence of Magadha became a memory of the past.

In the far north-west there was an eruption of new peoples from the desert-lands of Central Asia. The first to arrive were the Scythians who, after a rather involved peregrination, established their power under their king Maues in the Taxila region. The Shakas then spread in Mathura area and later established their satrapies in Ujjayini and Maharashtra. In the north-west, however, they were soon displaced by the Yueh-chi from Central Asia who, under pressure from other powerful tribes, had migrated to the Kashmir area. The Yueh-chi, known in Indian history as the Kushans, gradually developed their strength and under Kanishka established a vast empire stretching from Bihar in the east to Khorasan in the west and from Khotan in the north to the Konkan in the south. But mention may be made here of a brief interlude of Parthian rule in the area and in this the name of Gondophernes, presumed to have ruled between A.D. 21-46 is of importance. According to Christian tradition the apostle Saint Thomas came to his court, shortly after the Crucifixion, in A.D. 29 or 33. The tradition of the mission of Saint Thomas survives in India over the centuries and a section of the Indian Christians believes itself to be one of the oldest Christian communities in the world.

Kanishka is celebrated in the Buddhist tradition as a second Ashoka. A Buddhist synod was held at this time and the existing works of the Mahayana sect of the Buddhists were recited and definitive editions prepared. By this time Buddhism was split into two broad groups known as Hinayana (the Lesser Vehicle) and Mahayana (the Greater Vehicle), the former being the orthodox group holding rigidly to the Pali tradition while the latter was responsible for incorporating and developing many new ideas in the philosophical corpus of Buddhism. Kanishka's name is associated with great Buddhist philosophers like Vasubandhu and Nagarjuna and poets like Ashvaghosa, the author of the first Sanskrit epic on the life of the Buddha. Kanishka is reputed to have built many stupas and monasteries and under his liberal patronage Buddhism spread into Central Asia and thence to China, Korea and Japan. His was an age of great cultural synthesis wherein the four great cultural traditions of India, China, Persia and the Hellenistic world found a common meeting ground in the far-flung Kushan empire. A

new school of art, the Gandhara school, which was responsible for making the first images of the Buddha, flourished at this time and was under a deep Hellenistic influence. Kanishka ruled for 40 years (probably from A.D. 78-108 ?) and after him the Kushan power declined rapidly though traces of it survived down to the 4th century A.D.

V

While the north was being subjected to palace-revolutions and foreign invasions new peoples and new kingdoms were also rising in the west and the south. In the west the Satavahanas established their independent kingdom in the wake of the disintegration of the Maurya empire and ruled from *circa* A.D. 200 to 250. The chronicles offer us a long list of some 30 Satavahana kings though it is not possible to rely completely on this source. The original home of the Satavahanas was in Maharashtra with their early capital at Paithan in the present Bombay state. Theirs was a turbulent history characterised by imperial expansion and constant struggle against the Scythians or the Shakas as they are known in the Indian annals. Their rule was culturally of great importance for they acted as a bridge between the north and the south and were responsible for the slow penetration of Aryan and Brahmanical ideas and ideals in the Deccan and from thence to the south. They were also patrons of Buddhism and the Prakrit language and the cave-temples of Kanheri, Karle, Nasik and Nanaghat were excavated during their rule. The *Periplus of the Eyrthrean Sea,* a geographical note-book by a Roman sailor who visited India in the first century A.D., mentions many flourishing trade-marts and ports on the western coast suggesting a brisk Indian trade with the western world during the time of the Satavahanas.

The tradition of the Aryanisation of the west and the south which was initiated by the Satavahanas was carried to fruition by the Pallavas of Kanchi (modern Conjeeveram near Madras). The origin of this dynasty cannot be precisely ascertained and it was once believed that they were foreigners. This theory is now given up in favour of an indigenous origin. They began their career in the region between the Palar and the Krishna and

gradually extended their sway almost all over the peninsula. The Pallavas are best remembered for their patronage of Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Buddhism and Jainism and as builders of great temples. In the course of their history they came into conflict with the Kadambas of the Karnatak country and the Chalukyas of Badami. Their rule survived till the beginning of the ninth century A.D. and during the course of this long history they produced remarkable rulers like Sivaskandavarman, Simhavishnu, Mahendravarman and Narasimhavarman. Their memory survives in the rock-cut temples of Mahabalipuram and the great temples of Conjeeveram.

Besides the Kadambas the south also saw the rise and fall of the Salankayanas (*circa* A.D. 350-500) and the Vishnukundins (*circa* A.D. 450-550). The Salankayanas ruled from Vengi while the Vishnukundins rose to a temporary eminence in the Krishna districts. In a narrative concerned primarily with the history of India as a whole the significance of these powers is only marginal. But all of them played an important role in the creation of the cultural unity of the country. The process that started with the Satavahanas was carried further by the Pallavas, Kadambas, Pandyas and Cholas. The Pallavas are often described as the southern counterpart of the northern Imperial Guptas. They patronized Sanskrit language and literature and from their busy ports a large trade was carried on with the countries of South-east Asia. During this period also Indian cultural influences spread rapidly in South-east Asia through the colonies of Indian traders and the activities of Brahmanical priests and Buddhist missionaries who began frequenting these parts in large numbers. The art and architecture, literature and political institutions of Burma, Siam, Java and Cambodia show a deep Indian influence and in this task the south has played a notable part.

The Cholas began as the feudatories of the Pallavas but gradually developed their own independent power. Under Rajaraja I, in the closing years of the tenth century A.D., the Cholas became an imperial power and their arms were carried into western and northern parts of the country. The conquest of Ceylon was completed in the reign of Rajendra I and in A.D. 1025 the Chola navy inflicted a defeat on the rulers of Shri

Vijaya in distant Indonesia. The Cholas dominated the political scene in the south for two centuries but the rise of the Hoysalas brought about their end in A.D. 1279.

VI

In the north, after centuries of local revolutions involving the rise and fall of the Shungas, Kanvas, Kushanas, Shakas, Nagas and others, there arose a new empire. This was the empire of the Guptas (A.D. 319-550). The founder of this empire was Chandra Gupta I who began his career as a petty chieftain in northern Bihar but acquired considerable accession of strength by his marriage with Kumara Devi, a Licchavi princess. The Licchavis are first mentioned as a warlike republican tribe active during the time of the Buddha. Obviously they preserved their strength through the centuries and it is possible to argue that the Gupta-Licchavi union was a matrimonial alliance of far-reaching political significance. Chandra Gupta I nominated his son Samudra Gupta as his successor, a wise choice as later events proved.

The chief source of information about the Guptas is the corpus of inscriptions left by them and their coins which have been found all over northern, north-eastern and large parts of western India. Among these inscriptions the most interesting and valuable is the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta which gives us a detailed life-history of that great king. Soon after his accession Samudra Gupta embarked on his career of conquest. He fought three great campaigns, two in the north and one in the south, and defeated as many as 24 kings. His wars led him on a march of over 3000 miles and in all this he was never defeated, a great feat of military valour and ability ! His empire now became very extensive, comprising the whole of Bengal with the exception of the south-eastern parts and extended in the west to the Punjab and to the south to Jabalpur in the present Madhya Pradesh. His fame had spread all over the country and the kings of the south, the republican tribes, the Shaka and Kushana rulers and Nepal, all recognized his suzerainty. At this time king Meghavarna of Ceylon sent an embassy requesting permission from the Gupta emperor for building a monastery at Bodh-

gaya and it seems probable that the kings of the Indianized kingdoms of South-east Asia also maintained friendly relations with him.

But Samudra Gupta was no mere warrior. His coins, issued in six different types, reflect his many-sided personality. He was well-versed in classical literature and was a patron of learning, if not a poet himself. He was fond of music and hunting and was a devout follower of Brahmanism. He performed a horse-sacrifice signifying a revival of the old Brahmanical faith at this time. In his personality he combined physical vigour with intellectual and artistic refinement and in this it was a fitting symbol of the Golden Age which his activities were helping to usher in. His long and distinguished reign ended around A.D. 380.

His successor was equally illustrious. Chandra Gupta II liquidated the power of the Shakas and the acquisition of the western areas meant for his empire a flourishing sea-borne trade with the Roman world. His campaign against the Shakas was carefully planned and he strengthened his position through a number of matrimonial alliances. He married a Naga princess. His daughter, Prabhavati Gupta, was married to Rudrasena II, the Vakataka king, and after her husband's death carried on the administration of the kingdom of the Vakatakas in the central areas of India with great efficiency. A daughter of Kakusthavarman, the Kadamba ruler, was married to one of his sons and all these meant an extension of the Gupta influence in major parts of the country. He assumed the title of Vikramaditya (Sun of Valour) and many of his achievements recall to our minds the exploits of the legendary Vikramaditya who is presumed to have ruled in the first century B.C. from Ujjain. Tradition has it that the great poet Kalidasa was sent as a tutor to the young sons of Prabhavati Gupta and the balance of evidence indicates that Kalidasa lived and wrote his immortal works during the Golden Age of the Imperial Guptas.

Chandra Gupta's glorious reign ended in A.D. 412-13. His successor was his son Kumara Gupta I (414-15 to 455-56) who is not known for any warlike activities. Towards the end of his reign, however, there was an invasion which was repulsed with great effort by the young prince Skanda Gupta who, in 456, became the Gupta emperor. He ruled until 468 and his

greatest achievement was his successful fight against the Huns. Migrating from Central Asia the Huns descended on Europe and India in two groups. In A.D. 375 they ravaged Europe and shook the Roman empire to its very foundations. The India-bound group, called the White Huns, was beaten back by Skanda Gupta in 460-61 and this saved the country from suffering the kind of brutality Europe was subjected to. There was another Hun invasion of India in the opening years of the 6th century A.D. and inscriptions speak of two kings, Toramana and Mihiragula, who appear to have been Huns. The Huns were finally defeated by a confederacy of northern Indian kings led by Narasimha Gupta Baladitya and supported by Yashovarman of Mandasore. Subsequently the Huns were assimilated into Indian society.

Skanda Gupta died in A.D. 468 and after him the Gupta empire began to disintegrate. Wars of succession, revolts by provincial rulers and assumption of sovereignty by the feudatory kings were some of the factors active in this process of disintegration. On the ruins of this empire rose a few independent states that wielded uneasy sway from time to time. In the west rose the dynasty of the Maitrakas of Valabhi which ruled over Saurashtra and Gujarat for over two centuries from 500 to 770. Yashovarman, who collaborated with the Gupta king in the last fight against the Huns, declared himself an independent ruler. In Magadha the later Guptas took over whatever remained of the once mighty Gupta empire. Similarly the Maukharis and the Maitrakas also became the residuary legatees of that empire.

Thus ended the Gupta empire. But while it lived, it released great creative forces in the spheres of literature, science and the arts. The Guptas gave India, especially northern India, the much-needed sense of unity, security and peace. The Chinese pilgrim, Fa Hien, who came to India during the time of Chandra Gupta II, speaks in glowing terms of the happy life of the people. Though Buddhism still claimed numerous followers it was clearly on the decline. There was a great revival of Brahmanism and at this time arose the new popular Hinduism, that of the *Puranas*, the faith of millions of people even today. Vaishnavism and Shaivism had won a national following and

image worship and pilgrimages had become important parts of religious practice. The Gupta age, thus, was an age of peace and prosperity, urbanity and refinement, religious revival and intellectual achievement, classical literature and artistic eminence, and is aptly described as the Golden or Classical Age of ancient India. Possessed of self-confidence Indian culture freely and readily assimilated foreign influences ; but while it borrowed it took care to see that the winds of all lands, as they blew around the house, did not sweep it off its feet. The essential "Indianness" of India was realized and enriched and given a lasting and classical expression in the sculpture, painting and architecture of the age.

VII

The Gupta empire ceased to exist by about A.D. 550. For half a century or so northern India was parcelled out among small powers. Among these the state of Sthaneshwara showed great promise. Situated in the eastern parts of the Punjab, Sthaneshwara rose to prominence as a result of the activities of Prabhakaravardhan who defeated the Huns, ranged over the Indus land, Gandhara, Gujarat and Malwa. He had two sons, Rajyavardhana and Harshavardhana, and a daughter, Rajyashri, married to Grahavarman, the son of the Maukhari king Avantivarman.

In the closing years of the reign of Prabhakaravardhana came a Hun invasion and as the king was too old to go to war his son Rajyavardhana was sent to drive the invaders back. Harsha accompanied his brother but remained some distance behind with a supporting force. Rajyavardhana defeated the Huns but now the sad news came that his father lay seriously ill. Before he could return to the capital Prabhakaravardhana died and after some hesitation Rajyavardhana consented to be the successor. At this time a confederacy of northern Indian kings attacked the Maukharis and Grahavarman, Rajyashri's husband, was killed. Rajyavardhana hastened to the aid of his sister and though he succeeded in defeating the group of hostile kings led by King Shashanka of Bengal, he was treacherously slain. In the confusion that ensued Rajyashri, who was cast into pri-

son, escaped and made her way to the Vindhya mountains where she lived in the Buddhist hermitage of a family friend, Divakaramitra. On receipt of the news of his brother's death Harsha hurried to the battlefield and routed his enemies. Then began the search for Rajyashri who was located in the Vindhyas where Harsha arrived in time to prevent her from self-immolation. The two then returned to Sthaneshwara and as Rajyashri had no son Harsha accepted the responsibility of administration of the kingdom of Kanauj and the capital was then shifted to the great city of Kanauj.

Harsha understood well that he was surrounded by hostile kings and if his power were to survive he had to do some hard fighting. Mustering a strong force of cavalry, infantry and elephants he went about conquering lands and in all his campaigns he was defeated only once and that by the Chalukya king Pulakeshin II. The Chalukya dynasty was founded around A.D. 550 with its capital at Vatapi (modern Badami). The most powerful king of this dynasty was Pulakeshin II who successfully challenged the might of the Pallavas, and under his leadership the suzerainty of the Chalukyas spread over the whole of the present Bombay state with the exception of Saurashtra and northern Gujarat. In effect, therefore, India was now divided into two spheres of influence with Harsha supreme in the north and Pulakeshin the virtual master of the south. The claims to the possession of the border regions like Saurashtra seem to have precipitated the clash between Harsha and Pulakeshin some time between A.D. 630-34. The engagement was indecisive but each understood the other's strength and prepared to co-exist. Pulakeshin II was later killed in a war with the Pallavas and after him the kingdom was divided into two branches with the main line ruling in the west and the other governing the east. By A.D. 730 the Chalukyas had to surrender their power to the Rashtrakutas who arose in the Deccan.

Harsha, like Ashoka and Kanishka before him, is famous as a patron of Buddhism. As time passed he began to take great interest in Buddhism and Hiuen Tsang, the second Chinese pilgrim who was in India at this time, describes in great detail the emperor's charitable and cultural activities. Harsha forbade the slaughter of animals and built on the banks of the Ganges

several hundreds of stupas. He also erected hospices provided with food and drink and medical aid indicating thereby that the tradition of public hospitality initiated by Ashoka was still very much alive. Harsha convened five yearly assemblies and distributed generous gifts to the assembled scholars. He also made a generous provision for the Buddhist university of Nalanda which had now become an international centre of learning attracting students from Tibet, Central Asia, China, Korea and Indonesia. It was founded in the fifth century and continued to function till the end of the twelfth century A.D. Harsha ruled from A.D. 606 to 647 and after him the history of northern India once again becomes a record of a struggle for power and unstable political conditions.

VIII

The period of some 500 years from the death of Harsha to the establishment of the first Muslim kingdom in Delhi in 1206 is characterized by increasing political fragmentation, social regression and, with a few exceptions, intellectual atrophy. The centre of the political stage is held by the three powers, the Rashtrakutas in the west, the Gurjara-Pratiharas in the central zone and the Pala-Senas in Bengal. Kashmir witnesses a few years of benevolent rule under Muktapida and Chandrapida. In the far south the Cholas, as recounted earlier, become powerful but their influence is generally confined to the south. In the Deccan arose Dantidurga who defeated the rulers of Kanchi, Kalinga, Malawa and Lata and became the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. The Rashtrakutas displayed vigorous energy both in war and in peace and under their patronage the famous rock-cut temples of Ellora were excavated. They came into conflict with the Pratiharas and the Palas and unceasing wars, whether of aggression or of succession, effectively sapped their strength and by A.D. 948 they were nearing the end of their career. The Palas began their rule in Bengal in A.D. 750 and under Dharmapala extended their sway into northern India but further expansion was checked by the Rashtrakutas. The Gurjara-Pratiharas became a leading power under Nagabhata II (800-825) with their capital at Kanauj. The best-known ruler

of this clan was Bhoja who enjoyed a long reign (840-890) and became famous for his patronage of learning and culture. The rise of the Chandellas of Jejakabhukti and the Kalachuris eclipsed the power of the Pratiharas.

While the powers of northern India were thus engaged in internecine wars a new force had arisen in the Western Asian world and this now stood poised to strike across the Indian frontiers. This was the force of Islam. It was to shake the very foundations of Indian life and of this the Indian powers themselves were wholly ignorant. Mutual jealousies, local patriotism and regional rivalries combined with a static social and economic organization had made of India a fruitful field for foreign invasions and conquests. Decadence was writ large everywhere and it was obvious that the ancient age of creative effort, of inquisitive mind and vigorous thought, was long past. Already the dark age had begun and it was not till the second half of the 16th century that India was to know peace, enlightened government and cultural regeneration.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ADVENT OF THE CRESCENT

I

WHEN HARSHA WAS ruling over his northern Indian empire from Kanauj in the opening decades of the 7th century A.D. a revolutionary chapter was being written in the history of the world in distant Arabia. This was in the life and work of the Prophet Muhammad (A.D. 570-632). The creed that the Prophet preached, Islam, rose essentially as a revolt against the spiritual aridity of the then Arab world riven into tribal factions and overwhelmed by gross superstition. His message swept through the land as a gust of stormy wind and shook the Arab world to its roots transforming its very being in the process. Islam came as a noble message of the Justice of God and the Brotherhood of Man in humble submission to Him. The vision of the Prophet was universal in its reaches and contained within itself the vital strength of infusing new vigour in the body social of the Western Asian world. Arab, Turk and Persian, all now became the soldiers of this creed and within a couple of centuries the armies of Islam swept across a vast arc stretching from Spain to the Indus. Islam had released the pent-up energies of these peoples and had given them an ideal which set their imagination aflame.

The brillaint victories of these armies made the Caliphs (the Prophet's apostolic successors) the "most potent and absolute monarchs of the globe" at that time. Islam had brought into being a new humanity and had created for it a new destiny which was to affect profoundly the fortunes of tribes and kingdoms across three continents.

Islam had appeared in India much before the armies of the

Arabs and Turks carried its crescent on their banners strung from their spears. Centuries before their conversion to Islam the Arabs and Persians had had an important share of India's trade with the West. Within four years of the Prophet's passing away the first Muslim fleet had sailed in the Indian waters and Muslim colonies were soon in evidence along the western coast of India. The Muslims who had settled in Konkan, Kutch and Malabar freely intermarried with the native population. They were hospitably received and allowed to preach their new creed for which they gained many converts. Their ethics and philosophy deeply influenced the Hindu religious thought of the time. As traders they were highly regarded and as sailors much valued for their intimate knowledge of the sea and the winds. And they secured influence which far outweighed their numbers. As Tara Chand states : "On the one side their leaders became ministers, admirals, ambassadors and farmers of revenue and on the other they made many converts, propagated their religious ideas, established mosques and erected tombs which became centres of the activities of their saints and missionaries. It may, therefore, be premised without overstraining facts that if, in the development of the Hindu religion in the south, any foreign elements are found which make their appearance after the seventh century, and which cannot be accounted for by the natural development of Hinduism itself, they may with much probability be ascribed to the influence of Islam, provided, of course, they are not alien to its genius."

This peaceful phase, however, was soon to be overshadowed by invasions characterized by violence, bloodshed and destruction. Now a veneer of evangelism was made to conceal deeper motives of wealth and dominion. India, to these soldiers of fortune, was as much a land of obstinate unbelievers as a country of fabulous riches, full of incredible quantities of gold and jewels. The immediate provocation came from complaints of piracy in the Arabian Sea, and for certain acts of piracy the Hindu king of Sind was held responsible and called upon to make amends. When the king of Sind expressed his inability to comply with the request an expedition under the leadership of Muhammad bin Quassim, a handsome young soldier of fortune, was despatched. Muhammad arrived with a strong force, broke

through the defences, stormed the city of Debal and then marched on through the Indus region and beyond it to Multan collecting rich booty and taking numerous slaves. In 712, when the armies of Muhammad bin Quassim marched across Sind, a new chapter in the history of India was written.

But, in spite of his reckless courage and daring, the exploits of Muhammad bin Quassim (who died in 715 under tragic circumstances) were devoid of permanent results. Nearly three centuries had to pass before the predatory armies of Central Asia, under the leadership of Muhammad of Ghazni, were to introduce Islam to India in a particularly violent form. Before Muhammad came Sabuktagin (a slave of Alaptgin who was himself a slave of Abdul Malik, the Samanid king of Bokhara) who defeated Jaipal, the king of Lahore, and annexed a large stretch of territory reaching down to the plains of the Punjab. Muhammad was his successor who, between 1000 and 1026, raided India as many as 17 times leaving behind him a trail of plunder, desolation and death. His most famous exploit was the sack of the Shiva temple at Somnath in Saurashtra in 1024-25. It is pertinent to notice here that, in addition to securing the vicarious satisfaction of punishing idolatry, Muhammad caried away an enormous amount of booty thus pleasing, as he believed, God, and satisfying his craving for possessing fabulous wealth at the same time. Muhammad is generally described as a champion of Islam but, as has been noticed by Muslim historians, his raids meant more of a personal profit for him than a gain to Islam. The very fact that he employed a large body of Hindu troops in his army vitiates much of the force in the argument that his raids were in any way a part of the "Holy War". But it must be said that if he collected fabulous wealth from his plunder in India he lavished it with equal readiness on his patronage of learning and art in his beloved Ghazni. At his court lived famous poets like Firdausi, Asadi, and others. Undoubtedly a great soldier endowed with infinite courage and energy Muhammad was scarcely a man of any constructive ability and his empire fell asunder after his death as rapidly as it grew in his lifetime. His raids were, in our history, mere episodes which struck terror into,

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without securing submission from, the people attacked. Soon after his death the Ghaznavids were overthrown by the Ghoris, who hailed from the rugged hills of Ghor, situated between Ghazni and Herat.

In India, at this time, the most influential, in their political prestige, were the Rajputs. They were "born soldiers, each division had its hereditary leader and each formed a separate community, like clans in other countries, the members of which are bound by many ties to their chiefs and to each other. As the chiefs of these clans stood in the same relation to their raja as their own retainers to them the king, nobility and the soldiers all made one body, united by the strongest feelings of kindred and military devotion. The sort of feudal system that prevailed among the Rajputs gave additional stability to this attachment, and all together produced the pride of birth, the high spirit and romantic notions so striking in the military class of that period. Their enthusiasm was kept up by the songs of the bards and inflamed by frequent conquests for glory or for love. They treated women with respect and were guided even towards their enemies by rules of honour which it was disgraceful to violate." Most of these Rajput clans, prominent among whom were the Sisodias of Mewar, the Pratiharas, Parmars, Solankis and Chauhans, claimed descent from the sun, moon and the epic heroes and regarded themselves as *Kshatriyas* purified by the rites of the sacred fire. Their origin is not precisely known but it is held that they represented the Hinduised foreign settlers of an earlier age. A few of them like the Chandellas and Garhwals were associated with aboriginal tribes like the Gonds and the Bhars. Whatever their origin, Rajasthan, their land *par excellence,* showed "the sole example in the history of mankind of a people withstanding every outrage barbarity can inflict or human nature sustain and, bent to the earth, yet rising buoyant from pressure and making calamity a whetstone to courage". Unfortunately the Rajput clans were too much engrossed in mutual jealousies and internecine wars to read the writing on the walls of their rugged forts and they failed to unite in the face of the common danger to their homes and their power. Their history shows examples of unparalleled heroism and suffering, determination and valour, but all this availed

little. Their methods were always those of defensive war and in this they were constantly at the mercy of the invaders who struck at the most unexpected points. Their weapons were also antiquated when confronted with the fury of the invading horsemen for whom the Rajput's static warfare was easy game. The seemingly impregnable forts of the Rajputs became so much rubble before the artillery of the Arab, Turk, Afghan and Mongol. Furthermore, in the Hindu society of those days, based as it was on the caste-system, total mobilization for total war was next to impossible and the *Kshatriyas* had perforce to bear the brunt time and again in the matter of warfare. The other castes rarely contributed anything of significance in a war, offensive or defensive, and this meant a heavy strain on the *Kshatriyas* through the decades of wars. Clan loyalties and regional prejudices effectively prevented a national resistance to invasion and in this lay the seeds of the destruction of the indigenous power-groups.

The strength and weakness of the Rajput character were dramatically exposed in the events leading to the establishment of the first Muslim Sultanate in Delhi in 1206. The successors of Muhammad of Ghazni were weak and were easily overpowered by the restless hillmen of Ghor. Ghazni suffered destruction but was recovered from the Ghuzz Turkmans by 1173-74 and Muhammad, brother of the chief of Ghor, Ghias-ud-din, became its governor. Muhammad began raiding India and his campaigns continued over 30 years. He took Multan in 1175 and seven years later overran Sind. In 1191, however, he suffered a humiliating defeat at the Battle of Tarain where the Rajputs were led by Prithviraj Chouhan, the hero of many a romantic legend. The Sultan was so enraged at this that "he never slumbered in ease nor walked but in sorrow and anxiety" till the defeat was avenged. This came a year later when he returned to India with a formidable force of 120,000 Afghans, Turks and Persians and inflicted a severe defeat on the Rajputs. This was followed by a general destruction of numerous temples and towns and resulted in the annexation of large territories. These successes were due as much to the vigour of his offensive as to the disunity of the Rajputs and their pathetic dependance on a single leader whose disappearance generally led to a rout.

Muhammad showed great foresight in appointing Qutb-ud-din Aibak, his Turkish slave, his viceroy in India. Qutb-ud-din carried war into Delhi and Aligarh and after the Sultan's death founded the first Muslim dynasty in India. In 1194 Muhammad defeated Jayachandra, the king of Kanauj, and took Banaras while his general Muhammad-bin Bakhtiyar-Khilji overran Oudh and Bihar, destroying the Buddhist university towns of Nalanda, Odantapuri and Jagaddala, setting their libraries on fire, smashing images and putting the orange-robed monks to the sword. This sounded the death knell of Buddhism as an institutional force in India. Such of the monks as could escape from the holocaust fled into Nepal and Tibet with their sacred texts. Khilji marched on irresistibly into Bengal and surprised the Sena king into flight in 1199, capturing Lakhanauti which became the capital of the eastern areas.

Muhammad Ghori became the Sultan of Ghazni in 1203 which involved him in a bitter fight. His army was destroyed in the struggle for Khiva and a number of rebellions broke out in the different parts of the empire. The end came in 1206 when Muhammad fell a victim to treachery in his camp on the Indus.

II

Muhammad Ghori left behind him a large empire and a number of officers of exceptional ability. He is reported to have said once, " Other monarchs may have one son or two sons ; I have so many thousand sons, namely, my Turki slaves, who will be the heirs of my dominions. " Qutb-ud-din Aibak was one such heir and the most outstanding of them all. He was a Turkish slave of ungainly appearance, a soldier of great valour and skill, loyal to his master but alive to opportunities of gain and power to himself. The term " slave " needs some explanation. Slavery was a well established and important institution in early Islam. It did not always imply a social stigma and often capable slaves were successful suitors for the hand of the Sultan's daughter. Indeed, the slave often proved to be a better successor than the princes of the house and became the saviour of the kingdom at a time when the rightful heir was more interested in the pleasures of the cup or the harem than in the more prosaic and

strenuous work of government. Capable slaves were often given manumission and held the same status as the other nobles of the court.

On the 24th of June 1206 Qutb-ud-din Aibak formally installed himself as the Sultan in Delhi. A military leader of great energy and merit he had "the intrepidity of the Turk and the refined taste and generosity of the Persian; extreme liberality earned him the epithet of 'Lakh buksh' (giver of hundred-thousands) while, characteristically enough, his killing is also said to have been in *lakhs.*" He conquered Hansi, Meerut, Delhi, and the famed fortress of Ranthambhor. As a Muslim historian observes: "Merciless and fanatical, he built mosques on the ruins of temples. But this action of his may have been designed to please the fanaticism of Muslim orthodoxy [rather] than [as] a manifestation of the tendency that to the Turk 'Islam was only a weapon, a weapon of decoration and offence'." He may have appreciated the fact that the financial success of many a campaign rested on the systematic spoilation of the temples, then storehouses of easily accessible and enormous wealth. It was this urge to amass material wealth which sought justification in religion in the destruction of numerous temples.

Aibak must be given the credit for building the first Muslim building in India and this was in 1195 when the Kuuwat-ul-Islam mosque was begun in Delhi. It was completed a year later and was built out of Hindu materials, raised on the plinth of a temple. The famous Qutb Minar near Delhi was also planned by Aibak though completed by his successor Iltutmish in 1231-32 and appears to have been designed to serve both as a mazzina and a tower of victory. The name of the saint Khwaja Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyar Kabi of Ush, a place near Baghdad, seems to have been associated with the monument. The saint died at a place near Delhi and was much honoured by Iltutmish.

Qutb-ud-din's immediate successor was his son Aram who was deposed by Iltutmish, the governor of Badaon. Iltutmish was a Turk of the Ilbari tribe, a slave and son-in-law of Qutb-ud-din Aibak. He brought the principality of Delhi under his firm control by 1210 and between 1215 and 1227 defeated all his rivals. But earlier in 1221 the Sultan had to face a threat

more dangerous than the revolts of his peers and subordinates. This was the Mongol invasion of India by Chingiz Khan who, with lightning speed, had overrun China and devastated Balkh, Bokhara and Samarkand. In pursuit of the fugitive Shah of Persia the hordes of Chingiz Khan poured into India and advanced as far as the Indus. The heat of the Indian plains, however, was too much for them and they turned back. Between 1225 and 1226 the armies of Iltutmish crushed the revolts in Bengal and in 1228 the Sultan received recognition from the Caliph of Baghdad and this set at rest all controversy about his legal position in India. The next few years were occupied in defeating rebellions and making further conquests but this extraordinary career came to a sudden end when the Sultan died after a brief illness in 1256. Iltutmish "laid the foundations of an absolutist monarchy that was to serve later as the instrument of militarist imperialism under the Khiljis. By a clever compromise with religious leaders he disarmed moral opposition while the military class found profit and occupation in his expansionist schemes." There is no doubt that of the Slave rulers he was the greatest.

In the absence of a capable son Iltutmish had named his daughter Raziya as his successor, a departure from normal practice. However, she had to wait till Rukn-ud-din, her brother, showed his utter incapacity as a ruler and had to end his life in a prison a short while later. This gave her an opportunity and she more than justified her selection. But the intrigue, greed and powerful parasitism at the court proved too much for her and she was killed in 1246. The immediate cause of her downfall was her friendship with an Abyssinian slave and her independent nature, the latter more repugnant to the Turkish oligarchy which had set out to concentrate all power in its hands.

The death of Raziya was followed by a period of confusion which was now becoming a normal feature of the times. From the welter of claims and counter-claims emerged the challenge of Balban, one of the slaves of Iltutmish. He was the real power behind the throne on which sat Nasir-ud-din and, after the death of the puppet, Balban became the successor. He had to do some hard fighting before he could feel secure in his position

but he soon established order and showed his ability in creating an efficient system of administration. He maintained an efficient and loyal army and made an extensive use of spies to keep himself informed of the activities of his nobles and officials. Balban, says Ziauddin Barni, the chronicler of the times, restored the dignity of the throne and his authority was unchallenged. No sovereign had ever before exhibited such pomp and grandeur in Delhi. For the twenty-two years that Balban reigned he maintained the dignity, honour and majesty of the throne in a manner that could not be surpassed. Certain of his attendants who waited on him in private assured the chronicler that "they never saw him otherwise than fully dressed. During the whole time that he was *Khan* and *Sultan*, extending over nearly forty years, he never conversed with persons of low origin or occupation, and never indulged in any familiarity, either with friends or strangers, by which the dignity of the Sovereign could be lowered. He never joked with anyone, nor did he allow anyone to joke in his presence; he never laughed aloud, nor did he permit anyone in his court to laugh. . . . As long as he lived no officer or acquaintance dared to recommend for employment any person of low position or extraction.

"In the administration of justice he was inflexible, showing no favour to his brethren or children, to his associates or attendants; and if any of them committed an act of injustice, he never failed to give redress and comfort to the injured person. No man dared to be too severe to his slaves or handmaids, to his horsemen or footmen." The chronicler recounts several instances of his stern sense of justice and though his methods were drastic his actions produced the desired results. Before he died in 1286 he had done much to give to the central areas of the country the benefits of a strong and equitable government.

The death of Balban was the signal for a sanguinary struggle for power between the Turks and the Afgan Khiljis and in this Jalal-ud-din Khilji was conspicuously successful. He was the founder of the Khilji dynasty which ruled for 30 years (1290-1320). Jalal-ud-din met his death at the hands of his nephew Ala-ud-din Khilji whose first great exploit was his spectacular raid on the great fortress of Devgiri in the Deccan. This was the seat of the Yadava rulers who had to surrender themselves

to Ala-ud-din and pay a rich ransom. On his return, with characteristic amorality, Ala-ud-din murdered his uncle Jalal-ud-din and proclaimed himself as the Sultan in 1296. Two years later he defeated a Mongol invasion and, though sporadic Mongol raids continued up to 1304, Ala-ud-din's forethought and vigour checked the Mongols effectively. Ala-ud-din defeated King Hammir of Ranthanbhor in 1301 and in 1303 the war against Chitor was started. Ala-ud-din had heard of the great beauty of the queen Padmini of Chitor and desired to make her an inmate of his harem. Her husband, Ratan Sinha, was arrested by questionable means but was subsequently rescued by his clansmen through a stratagem. Two years later the armies of Ala-ud-din had overrun the whole of northern India and in 1309 his general, Malik Kafur, had subdued the Kakatiyas of Warangal and had begun his spectacular march across peninsular India. Kafur defeated the Hoysalas and the Pandyas and marched to the farthest point south ever reached by the Muslim armies so far. These wars brought him immense riches, the object of most of the campaigns of this period.

The state that had now come into being was a state based on perpetual war run by a class of parasitic nobles who were fit only for war both by their training and by their desire to amass wealth. Warfare also became, in another sense, a profitable pastime for many of the rulers of this age as it enabled them to keep these nobles constantly busy and away from the capital where their presence invariably led to intrigue and factional activities. As the dynasties that ruled from time to time had little of the prestige of long tradition or a social status higher than that of the nobles, government was very often an astute game of maintaining a balance of power or alternately of effecting assassinations. Furthermore, as the state had also introduced the principle of dividing the subjects into Muslims and non-believers it was constantly engaged in an undeclared war against the masses of Hindus who were always regarded as second class citizens burdened with extra taxes in return for which the state did very little service to them.

If Ala-ud-din was a great conqueror—under him the Afghan military regime had extended its sway almost all over India—he was also an able administrator. He fixed the prices of

supplies, ordered the registration of merchants and appointed market supervisors. He was particularly suspicious of the wealthy Hindus and made his laws in such a manner that no Hindu would be able to ride a horse, to carry arms, to wear rich clothes, or to enjoy any of the luxuries of life. His wide conquests and enormous wealth gave him an extraordinary estimate of himself which made him declare: "I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful. Whatever I think for the good of the state or suitable for the emergency, that I decree and so far what may happen to me on the approaching Day of Judgement that I know not." This was a new doctrine of sovereignty which spurned the control of spiritual as well as temporal authority. This was mediaeval despotism at its best or worst, its final validity resting not on the dictates of theology or law but on the armed might of the Sultan.

As a person Ala-ud-din was far from attractive. He was intensely suspicious of plots against his power and person and made an extensive use of espionage. He prohibited the use of liquor thinking that strong drink set the tongues wagging and drinking parties bred gossip and led to conspiracies. He also stopped all social gatherings for the same reason and the Hindus were treated with much severity. They were so terrorized that Ala-ud-din could boast: "At my command they are ready to creep into holes like mice." Of his pretensions to religious authority the chronicler Barni states that "During the time that he was thus exalted with arrogance and presumption, he used to speak in company about two projects that he had formed and would consult with his companions and associates upon the execution of them. One of the two schemes which he used to debate about he thus explained, 'God Almighty gave the blessed Prophet four friends, through whose energy and power the Law and Religion were established, and through this establishment of Law and Religion the name of the Prophet will endure to the day of judgement ... God has given me also four friends. . . who, through my prosperity, have attained to princely power and dignity. If I am so inclined I can, with the help of these four friends establish a new religion and creed; and my sword, and the swords of my friends, will bring all men to adopt it. Through this religion, my name and that of my

friends will remain among men to the last day like the names of the Prophet and his four friends.' " The other project was to emulate the victorious career of Alexander the Great. Of his ideas on statecraft the chronicler has this to say : " He was a king who had no acquaintance with learning, and never associated with the learned. When he became king, he came to the conclusion that polity and government are one thing and the rules and decrees of law are another. Royal commands belong to the king, legal decrees rest upon the judgement of *Kazis* and *Muftis*. In accordance with this opinion whatever affair of state came before him, he only looked to the public good, without considering whether his mode of dealing with it was lawful or unlawful. He never asked for legal opinions about political matters, and very few learned men visited him. . . ." This was probably the first attempt by an early Muslim king to flout the authority of the sacerdotal leaders and to secularise the state though Ala-ud-din did not completely shake off the domination of the Caliph. It is, however, difficult to hold that Ala-ud-din's attempt at the separation of the powers of the State from those of the religious heads was born of any deep urge of principles. Ala-ud-din was not quite capable of deep thought which would lead his mind into the unfamiliar domains of metaphysics, philosophy or religion. Whimsical, quick-tempered, obstinate and frequently sadistic in his cruelty he became more " reckless and arrogant as the world smiled upon him and fortune befriended him". He elevated into a political principle the practice of visiting the sins of the rebels upon the heads of their innocent wives and children. And as if Nemesis were overtaking him and his house, within four years of his death in 1316, out of a dynastic revolution rose a new line of kings, that of the founder of the Tughlaq dynasty (1320-1388), Ghias-ud-din, a man of humble origin. By personal merit and effort he rose to a high position and taking advantage of the prevailing confusion established his own rule in Delhi in 1320. His first task was to restore law and order in which he showed marked ability. In his brief regime of five years he crushed the power of the Kakatiyas of Warangal and after his death in 1325 Muhammad Tughlaq became his successor. Muhammad was a learned person of practical ability, a scholar and poet who revelled in the

use of similes and metaphors. Ibn Batuta, the Moorish traveller who visited India at this time, said of the Sultan : "Of all the people this king loves most to make presents and also to shed blood. His door is never free from an indigent person who is to be enriched and from a living person who is to be killed. Stories of his generosity and bravery as well as of his cruelty and severity towards the offenders have obtained great currency. Despite this, he is the humblest of men and most devoted to the administration of justice and to the pursuit of truth. The mottoes and emblems of Islam are preserved by him and he lays great stress on prayer, the neglect of which is punished by him. He is one of those kings whose good luck is unique and whose felicity is extraordinary ; but his dominating quality is his generosity." His nature was full of contradictions though his intentions were generally honourable. He increased taxes to raise the revenue receipts but this caused widespread distress. Attempting fiscal reform in 1330 he issued a token copper currency to facilitate trade and commerce but it actually had the opposite result as the market was flooded with spurious home-made coins and finance became chaotic. He attempted to levy more taxes than were authorised by the Islamic law, made himself the supreme court of appeal and thought of grand schemes of conquests in the Himalayan regions which were doomed to failure. His most ill-conceived scheme was the transfer of his capital from Delhi to Devgiri in the Deccan and in this much needless misery was caused to a population suddenly ordered to undertake the long journey. This ended in a dismal failure and the population was ordered back to Delhi in 1326-27. All these acts, many of them clearly visionary and far ahead of his times, were not appreciated by his contemporaries and historians who called him the "Mad Sultan". There were numerous revolts towards the end of his reign which came to a close on the 24th of March, 1351.

His successor was Firuz with whom began a period of religious reaction and obscurantism. Firuz conducted two expeditions in Bengal in 1353-54 and 1359-60 and two in Thatta in Sind in 1360-61 and 1370-72. He is reputed as a great builder who founded the towns of Firuzabad, Fatehbad and Jaunpur. He was also fond of gardening and did much to promote Islamic

learning. His death in 1370 virtually led to the end of the rule of the Tughlaqs. In 1398 Timur Lang invaded India and the empire of Delhi lay prostrate before him. Timur left behind him a trail of death and desolation and a dynastic revolution completed the work of disintegration of the power of the Tughlaqs.

On the ruins of the empire of the Tughlaqs arose the Sayyids who claimed descent from the Prophet. The Sayyids ruled from 1412 to 1450 and were supplanted by the Afghan Lodis who were overthrown by Babar in 1526. With it the era of Early Muslim rule ended and a new chapter was opened in the history of Medieval India.

While dynasties were established and overthrown in the north the south saw the rise of the Five Sultanates and the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar. In 1374 was founded the Bahamani Sultanate which later in the 15th century was split into the five kingdoms of Berar (1484-1574), Bidar (1487-1619), Bijapur (1489-1686), Ahmadnagar (1490-1637) and Golconda (1522-1687) representing the growth of the political power of the completely Indianized Muslims independent of the power in Delhi. The Hindus made a rapid recovery and built the empire of Vijayanagar which lasted in all its glory from 1336 to 1565 releasing great creative energies among the people. The empire was founded by the two brothers Harihara and Bukka and the greatest king of the dynasty was Krishnadevaraya the splendour of whose court is fully described by foreign travellers such as Abdur Razak and Nikitin in such detail. His portrait is sketched by the Portuguese traveller Paes who describes him as of "medium height and of fair complexion and good figure, rather fat than thin ; he has on his face signs of small-pox. He is the most feared and perfect king that could possibly be, cheerful of disposition and very merry. He is one that seeks to honour foreigners and receives them kindly, asking about all their affairs whatever their condition may be. He is a great ruler and a man of much justice." Well built of physique and keen of intelligence Krishnadevaraya was a great patron of culture and under his benign rule Hindu India in the south saw a veritable renaissance. Of the city Abdur Razak says : "The city of Bijanagar is such that eye has not seen nor ear heard

of any place resembling it upon the whole earth. It is built so that it has seven fortified walls, one within the other." Inside the fortress the architecture was impressive, rich and gorgeous and reflected the wealth and power of the empire. Vijayanagar was constantly engaged in conflict with the Sultans of the Deccan and the end came with the battle of Talikota in 1564 when the confederacy of the Sultans of the Deccan crushed the power of Vijayanagar. The splendid city was completely destroyed and though Vijayanagar survived the blow for some time it was like the flicker of a dying lamp.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BEGINNINGS OF A NATIONAL MONARCHY

IN THE FIRST quarter of the 16th century India was on the brink of a great political transformation. For about four hundred years the tides of revolutionary Islam had beaten against the wall of Hindu tradition. While it had made significant breaches in this wall Islam failed to shake the structure and through the centuries it so lost its revolutionary character that it was soon transformed into a tributary stream in the national life of India. Hinduism fought back with vigour and in spite of repeated defeats staged a recovery. The Sultans of Delhi dreamt of dominion and achieved political eminence from time to time. But the Rajputs held out and the south saw the rise of the great Vijayanagar empire. In Delhi itself there was decadence. From the much-battered capital of the then Muslim India the Afghan Lodis wielded an uneasy sway. In Gujarat ruled the Sultan Muhammad Muzaffar, a sovereign independent of Delhi. In the Deccan was founded the Bahamani power while in Malwa, in Central India, Mahmud Khilji held sway. In distant Bengal Nasrat Shah jealously guarded his independence against encroachments from the Lodis. In Chitor ruled Rana Sangram Sinha—Rana Sang as he was commonly known—now a power of no inconsiderable influence. Hinduism and Islam were no longer in mortal combat for the lines of cleavage now were more personal and territorial than religious. Constant wars and the destruction consequent on such wars had wearied the people. Men now yearned for peace and orderly government. All signs indicated the birth of a new power which would usher in an age of imperial unity. Strangely enough the instrument for the coming of this new age in Indian history was

a descendant of two of the most dreaded scourges of Asia. This instrument of the new historical destiny was Babar.

Zahiruddin Muhammad, nicknamed Babar the Tiger, was born in Farghana on the 14th of February, 1483. He was the son of Umar Shaikh Mirza who, in 1452, had succeeded to what remained of the once great empire built by Timur Lang. Indeed, Babar claimed descent from Timur Lang on his father's side and another dreaded hero of history, Chingiz Khan, on his mother's. Babar lost his father at the age of 11 and the prospect before him was none too promising. He had to struggle hard and in futility to secure his patrimony. Samarkand, Bokhara and Ghazni lured him into war several times but victory, in spite of his strenuous efforts, ever eluded the young Mughal. At the age of 21 Babar was a king without a throne and a general without an army. In the intervals between his wars in Central Asia Babar thought of India and tried out four separate invasions which, however, were merely exploratory raids. Thwarted in Samarkand Babar was "always full of the idea of invading Hindustan". In his own words he regarded the lands of Hindustan as his "own domains, and was resolved to acquire the possession of them either by war or peace". And opportunity soon offered itself to Babar to make good this ancestral claim. The empire of the Lodis, such as it was, was riven with intrigues and factions. In 1525 Babar decided that the time had now come to undertake seriously an invasion of India. As his troops advanced in the country the Lodi ruler, Sultan Ibrahim, attempted to check Babar's progress and a battle was fought on the historic battlefield of Panipat in April 1526.

The Indian opposition now assumed the form of a national opposition for there was formed the alliance between the Muslim armies of the Lodi chief and the Hindu forces led by Rana Vikramajit of Gwalior. To the allies Babar was a foreign invader who threatened the power of the Indian chiefs. Babar fully realized the import of this battle. Opposing him was an army of 100,000 men and numerous elephants. As he puts it, his opponent "possessed the accumulated treasures of his father and grandfather, in current coin, ready for use. It is a usage in Hindustan, in situations similar to that in which the enemy

now were, to expend sums of money in bringing together troops who engage to serve for hire." But Ibrahim Lodi was none too lavish in spending money and the weaknesses of his armies Babar decided to exploit fully. Babar had a decisive advantage over his enemy in the park of artillery, a new and revolutionary weapon in Indian warfare of the times. The salvoes of his guns were to herald the advent of the modern age in India. As he describes the scene Babar directed that, " according to the custom of Rum (that is, of the Ottomans), the gun-carriages should be connected together with twisted bull-hides, as with chains. Between every two gun-carriages were six or seven *turas* or breast-works. The matchlockmen stood behind these guns, or *turas*, and discharged their matchlocks." The Indian armies charged with apparent ferocity but Babar's line held. His guns caused consternation and the enemy, very soon, was reduced to a twisted mass of fleeing men in the face of the famous *tulughma* or flanking movement of Babar's Central Asian cavalry. Says Babar : " Such confusion ensued, that the enemy, while totally unable to advance, found also no road by which they could flee. The sun had mounted spear-high when the onset of battle began, and the combat lasted till mid-day, when the enemy were completely broken and routed, and my friends victorious and exulting. By the grace and mercy of Almighty God, this arduous undertaking was rendered easy for me, and this mighty army, in the space of half a day, laid in the dust." Babar's triumph was complete. As he entered Delhi he sent his son Humayun posthaste to Agra to prevent the flight of the treasure. Humayun treated kindly the seraglio of the Rajput chief Vikramajit Singh for which he received as gift of their gratitude the famous diamond, the *Koh-i-noor* which, through its scintillating substance, reflected the vagaries of Indian history. Humayun offered this diamond to his father who presented it to him as a token of his affection.

Babar had won the battle of Panipat but much remained to be done. One of his most formidable rivals was the Rajput leader Rana Sang of Chitor. Babar's movements had aroused Rana Sang's suspicions about the Mughal intentions. The Rana was now convinced that the Mughal advent was no sporadic incursion but the first step in the process of the establish-

ment of a dynasty. This the Rana was determined to challenge and battle was joined at Khanua, 37 miles west of Agra, in March, 1527. The army that faced Babar was the flower of Rajput soldiery, determined, brave and heroic. Babar now decided to fight a *jehad* or Holy War against the infidel and as a dramatic gesture highlighting his purpose "having sent for the gold and silver goblets and cups, with all the other utensils used for drinking parties, I directed them to be broken, and renounced the use of wine, purifying my mind. The fragments of the goblets, and other utensils of gold and silver, I directed to be divided among *darweshes* and the poor. . . ." Babar was very fond of wine and enjoyed some very riotous parties and this gesture of his, though late, lent a touch of religious seriousness to his effort in the war. In order to put heart into his wavering ranks Babar addressed his men : "Noblemen and soldiers ! Every man that comes into this world is subject to dissolution..... How much better is it to die with honour than to live with infamy ! Let us, then, with one accord, swear on God's holy word, that none of us will even think of turning his face from this warfare, nor desert the battle and slaughter that ensues, till his soul is separated from his body." This exhortation had immediate effect. The guns were moved into position and once again the well-tried Central Asian cavalry tactics yielded rich results. After ten hours of hard fighting Babar had destroyed Rana Sang. Soon he reduced Mewat and entered its capital Alwar in triumph on the 7th of April, 1527. Early next year, on the 29th of January, 1528, Babar defeated another leading Rajput chief, Medini Rai of Chanderi, and these victories had demonstrated to all concerned that the Mughal king was here to stay and rule as an emperor.

But trouble was brewing in Oudh. Though the Lodis were defeated they were by no means completely crushed and Mahmud Lodi, a brother of Ibrahim Lodi—slain on the battlefield of Panipat—had collected an impressive force of some 100,000 men and had advanced on Banaras. The Mughal and the Lodi armies met at the junction of the Ganges with its tributary, the Ghogra, and the battle marked another milestone in the progress of the foundation of the Mughal empire in India.

On the 6th of May, 1529 Babar once again proved victorious and the Afghan defeat was complete.

In the meanwhile Humayun had proceeded to Badakshan and Kabul. At Sambhal he was stricken with fever and Babar was most disturbed on receipt of this news. Humayun was brought to Agra where everything possible was done to cure him of his malady. Finally, at the suggestion of a holy man Babar offered his own life as a sacrifice so that his son may live and this supreme sacrifice apparently saved Humayun's life. Shortly afterwards Babar suffered a serious illness and died on the 26th of December, 1530.

Thus ended a short but brilliant career. Babar had found life hard as he fought from town to town and staked his fortune on far-flung battlefields. His career in Central Asia was a sad failure which was more than made up by his successes in India. If he lost a kingdom in Samarkand he laid the foundations of a mighty empire in India and bequeathed to his son not only his own life but also a sizable kingdom. A strange combination of warrior and poet, he showed as much skill in the use of the Central Asian horse and the artillery as a keen eye for the beauties of nature and the artifice of man. As Lane Poole states, Babar was "the link between Central Asia and India, between predatory hordes and imperial government, between Tamerlane and Akbar. The blood of the two great scourges of Asia, Chingiz and Timur, mixed in his veins, and to the daring and restlessness of the nomad Tatar he joined the culture and urbanity of the Persian. He brought the energy of the Mongol, the courage and capacity of the Turk to the listless Hindu ; and himself a soldier of fortune and no architect of empire, he yet laid the first stone of the splendid fabric which his grandson Akbar achieved.... His permanent place in history rests upon his Indian conquests, which opened the way for an imperial line ; but his place in biography and literature is determined rather by his daring adventures and persevering efforts in his earlier days, and by the delightful *Memoirs* in which he related them. Soldier of fortune as he was, Babar was not the less a man of fine literary taste and fastidious literary perception. In Persian, the language of culture, the Latin of Central Asia, as it is of India, he was an accomplished poet,

and in his native Turki he was master of a pure and unaffected style alike in prose and verse." His *Memoirs* reveal his many-sided and rich personality, which made him love war and the gentle art of gardening with equal zest. His first impressions of India were far from favourable. He deplored the dearth of good horses and dogs, grapes and melons, ice and cold running water. He disliked the sight of half-clad men and held in contempt the taste of those who could not cultivate good gardens. But he was quick to appreciate the fact that India was a country rich in gold and silver, diamonds and pearls. And he writes in praise of the large numbers of skilled artisans and architects. Active in body and mind Babar was ever ready to march across hills and plains and, though defeat had dogged his steps in his youth, he never lost faith in himself and confidence in his ultimate success. As he lay dying Babar could look back with satisfaction and pride on his achievements in India in the all too short period of five years.

Babar had, the chronicles tell us, sacrificed his own life so that his son Humayun may live and rule over the kingdom he had won. "Humayun" means "lucky" but it is an irony of fate that never was a monarch so unlucky as Humayun. He was the eldest of the four sons of Babar and was declared successor on the 29th of December, 1530, at the age of 23. He had seen life in all its moods and had opportunities of learning statecraft in the hard school of experience. The situation confronting him at his accession was far from comfortable. Babar had overthrown the Afghans and crushed them at the battle of Ghogra. But they were still a power to reckon with in the uncertainties of the Indian politics of those days. The Rajputs were sullen and harboured thoughts of revenge. Then there was Bahadur Shah of Gujarat whose ambitions could easily encroach upon the Mughal preserves. The Mughal army itself was a motley crowd of Mughals, Uzbegs, Persians, Afghans and Indians, impressive in its zest for war but uncertain in its loyalties. And finally there were Humayun's relations, the Mirzas, who proved to be his worst enemies. Of these one was Babar's brother-in-law, the other had married Humayun's step-sister, the third was a grandson of the Sultan of Khorasan and the fourth was his own brother Kamran. His other brothers Askari

and Hindal also gave him serious trouble. But his greatest enemy, perhaps, was his own temperament. Humayun was more of a poet and dilettante than a conqueror or statesman and this produced its inevitable effect. Matters were made worse by a series of blunders committed by the young emperor from time to time. The first of these was the distribution of different parts of the empire to his brothers and relations. This was done in good faith but good faith was conspicuous by its absence except in his own heart. In the middle of the year 1531 Humayun captured the great fort of Kalinjar and a little later the Afghan opposition in Jaunpur was crushed. So far the start of the career was promising. But the good effect of this was jeopardised by the extraordinary pomp with which these initial victories were celebrated at a time when total mobilization against trouble ahead was imperative. The Mirzas revolted and Bahadur Shah of Gujarat treated Humayun's request with open contempt by refusing to surrender Muhammad Zaman Mirza, then in Gujarat. After some loss of time spent in hunting and other pleasures, Bahadur Shah was attacked in 1534 while the latter was engaged in the siege of Chitor. Humayun's failure to take advantage of Bahadur Shah's preoccupation enabled the Gujarat ruler to complete the siege and then proceed against the imperial army. Finally Bahadur Shah escaped to Gujarat and to the island of Diu. The fortress of Champanir was stormed and the treasures discovered there were distributed by the emperor to his nobles. Once again, Humayun's weakness made itself manifest and Malwa and Gujarat which had fallen "like ripe fruits into his hands [were] recklessly squandered away" by misplaced munificence.

But the greatest challenge came from the Afghan leader Sher Shah who, by 1531, had already occupied south Bihar including the stronghold of Chunar. Humayun acted promptly by sending an army against him but Sher Shah bought time by offering soothing promises and Humayun was lulled into dangerous complacence. Sher Shah was quite clear about what he was trying to do, had steadily built up his strength and was ready for the showdown which came in the battle of Kanauj in 1541.

Sher Shah was a man of exceptional abilities. Son of Hasan

Khan, the Governor of Sasaram and a commander of 500 horse under Sikandar Lodi, Farid (Sher Shah of later times) was a voracious reader and took a special interest in the study of history. In 1511 he was placed in charge of the principality of Sasaram where he soon made his mark as a wise administrator devoted to the welfare of his subjects. In 1526, while with Sultan Muhammad, he received the nickname of Sher Shah for his valour in slaying a tiger.

Early in life Sher Shah had seen the Mughal court at close quarters. For a time he served Babar and was present at the siege of Chandri in 1527-28. Babar, a shrewd judge of character, had noticed this Afghan and had warned his followers to "keep an eye on him". In 1529, Sher Shah left Babar and joined the Mughal's opponent, Sultan Muhammad. After the Sultan's death Sher Shah continued in the service of his successor Jalal Khan, and soon began his career of aggrandizement. By a series of brilliant moves he captured Chunar, defeated the Sultan of Bengal, captured another strong fort, that of Rhotasgarh, and defeated Humayun at Chaunsa in 1539. In 1540-41 he inflicted a decisive defeat on the Mughal army and became the emperor of Hindustan. Humayun had lost his throne and had to take the road into wilderness.

The rise of Sher Shah was spectacular but by no means unexpected. In part his success was due to the weakness of his adversary but to a large extent it was the reward of inspired leadership and exceptional military skill. With vigour Sher Shah pursued the fugitive Humayun across northern and northwestern India and defeated attempts at rebellion against his power in Bengal. Between 1542 and 1544 his forces had extended his control over central India, Mewar and Chitor but this brilliant career met with a sudden end when Sher Shah was fatally injured by the accidental burst of a shell during the siege of Kalinjar in May 1545.

The campaigns of Sher Shah provide an eloquent testimony to his prowess, qualities of leadership and military ability. He understood the Afghan character well and marvellously succeeded in uniting the Afghans by providing them with faith in themselves and in the ideal of imperial greatness. But apart from his personal virtues, which were many, he also displayed

a tendency to elevate consideration of expediency to the dignity of moral norms, a duplicity and Machiavellian inclination which reduced diplomacy and statecraft to a game of power-politics of a questionable kind. But in his administration he revealed an entirely different spirit. He set up the highest standards in administrative efficiency and integrity and during his all too short career introduced many a reform which served as models for the great Akbar later on. To his revenue officers he said : "Be lenient at the time of assessment but show no mercy at the time of collection," and devised a system of revenue assessment and collection which benefited the much harassed peasantry. He had roads built and had them lined with shade-giving trees. At regular intervals rest-houses were maintained and a system of mail-runners was devised to maintain contacts with even the most distant parts of the empire.

In all this he reminds us of Ashoka of the Maurya age and many of his actions obviously inspired Akbar later on. He placed the organization of his army on a sound footing and renewed the custom of branding horses to prevent the use of fraudulent musters. In fiscal matters he standardized the rupee at 178 grammes of silver and in his charity he showed a great spirit of generosity. Though occasionally he scorned idolatry he wisely refrained from persecution. Though most of the time engaged in war he took great pleasure in listening to discussions on philosophy and his sense of justice is well reflected in the oft-quoted saying, "Justice is the most excellent of religious rites, and it is approved alike by kings of infidels and of the faithful". The spirit of his rule is truly mirrored in his massive and beautiful masoleum at Sasaram which is rightly described as "one of the best designed and most beautiful buildings in India". Sher Shah ruled for a short time but left the indelible impress of his personality on the history of India.

The death of Sher Shah led to the dissolution of the power which he had so skilfully built up. Revolts and disturbances were widespread and presented a welcome opportunity to Humayun to stage a come-back. During the time of his exile Humayun suffered great hardships and was driven from place to place. His brothers continued to be a source of anxiety and weakness for adversity had made them learn little and forget

nothing. It was in this period of exile that his son Akbar was born in 1541 and the young prince had to be left in the care of faithful retainers when Humayun proceeded to Persia. There he agreed to be a Shia in order to secure help from the Shah of Persia. He entered Kabul in 1545 and later on defeated Mirza Suleiman and Kamran. Finally in 1554 Humayun began his march into India and entered Lahore in February 1555. At the battle of Macchiwara a great victory was won and it "decided the fate of the empire; and the kingdom of Delhi fell forever from the hands of the Afghans". On the 23rd of July, 1555 Humayun made his triumphant entry into Delhi and the fugitive prince once again became the emperor of Hindustan. There was rejoicing all round, the nobles were rewarded, the soldiers given handsome gifts, and the emperor spent the rest of the year in enjoyment and comfort.

But the end was near. On the 24th of January, 1556 Humayun was in his library. He heard the call for prayers and began hurrying down the stairs. His foot slipped and the fall proved fatal. As the sun set Humayun left this world. A sad, though remarkable, life had come to an end.

Life, for Humayun, was indeed hard and unkind. By nature he was better suited to a time of peace and plenty but he was forced to live in an age when treachery was common and warfare constant. He had varied interest and read poetry with as much pleasure as he perused works on astronomy and mathematics. Kindly in his thoughts and polite in his conduct, he was forever a victim of faithlessness and wicked design at the hands of his friends and foes alike. He was fond of ease and gaiety, was addicted to opium and lived his life with indolent felicity. Lavish in his generosity, he was fond of pomp and show and though personally brave he showed little ability in comprehending the complexity of a battle order. He was devout and remarkable "for his wit and urbanity of manners" and an engaging personality in the boudoir but a sorry figure on the battlefield. He bore calamity gallantly and "tumbled through life and out of it". By nature a poet he was forced to spend a lifetime in the saddle and it was the same cruel fate which took him safely across mountains and deserts which caused his fall to death from the stairway of his palace.

CHAPTER FIVE

AKBAR THE GREAT

WHEN HUMAYUN DIED in 1556 his son Akbar was 13 years old. Humayun had retrieved his throne but not his empire and no other king faced a prospect so bleak as did Akbar when he was formally proclaimed king on the 14th of February, 1556. Rebellions were simmering all over the land; the Rajputs of Mewar, Jodhpur, Bundi and Jaisalmer had not yet reconciled themselves to the existence of the Mughal power. Malwa and Gujarat were both independent, in theory as well as in fact. In Kashmir ruled a local Muslim Sultan chary of involvement in the politics of continental India and in Sind ruled kings fiercely jealous of their independence. In Kabul lived Akbar's half-brother, Mirza Muhammad Hakim, who was going to prove a source of serious embarrassment later on. In the Deccan and the south the Five Sultanates and the kings of Vijayanagar engaged themselves in intermittent warfare unconcerned with the vicissitudes of political fortune in the north. But Akbar had one great asset and that was his indomitable courage, and in Bairam Khan he found a loyal friend and guide.

Born at Umarkot in Sind on the 23rd of November, 1542 (this date was later shifted to October 15—to please courtly superstition—which became the official date of birth), Akbar shared, in his early childhood, all the trials and tribulations of his father's life in exile. He had a host of nurses, some ten of them, and all of them stood in a peculiarly tender relationship to him and these "foster-mother" relations were to exert a strong influence in the formative years of his reign. In his childhood Akbar was far from a promising pupil and, in spite of the remonstrances of his father, spent more time in the sports

of the field than in scholarly labours. The result of this was that Akbar remained illiterate all his life though this did not prevent him from being one of the wisest of monarchs in the history of the country.

Soon after his accession Akbar had to face a serious threat in the rise of Hemu, an able minister of the Sultan Adali of the Sur family. Hemu defeated the Sultan's rivals and marching to Delhi defeated the Mughal governor there. Tardi Beg Khan, the Mughal governor, had to retreat and pay for this withdrawal from Delhi with his life when he was executed at the suggestion of Bairam Khan for deserting his post. As Hemu looked around, flushed with success, a severe famine raged over large areas of northern India. Akbar and his counsellor had fully understood the fact that their first task was to defeat Hemu and this was achieved at the second battle of Panipat, on the 5th of November, 1556, when Hemu was killed and his army routed. Consequently Akbar secured the cities of Delhi and Agra and the nascent Mughal empire survived the greatest crisis of its life. As Akbar was very young at this time all the power was vested in the hands of Bairam Khan. Bairam Khan was an astute statesman and guided the ship of state in those stormy days with great skill and ability. In 1558 Shah Abdul Latif, a learned Persian Sufi, was appointed as tutor and to him must go the credit of firmly implanting the ideas of *Sulh-i-kull* (universal tolerance) in the mind of young Akbar. Akbar also had two other tutors, Mir Saiyad Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad, to teach him drawing and painting and, though Akbar did not become an artist himself, he understood and appreciated good art wherever it was found and became a great patron of renowned artists later on. During these years Akbar left everything to Bairam Khan and spent considerable time in hunting and riding. As he grew older, however, he became impatient of the controlling influence of Bairam Khan and in 1560 politely requested his guardian to undertake the customary pilgrimage to Mecca as a graceful exit from the affairs of the court. This the noble was willing to do but the indecent haste shown in hustling him out of the country irked him and he rose in a short-

lived and futile rebellion. There was a reconciliation after this but the Khan was murdered in Gujarat while on his way to Mecca. Akbar was genuinely grieved to hear of this sad event and married the Khan's widow and in due course raised his son to an important imperial office.

The exit of Bairam Khan was a welcome chance for the "harem faction" to begin its efforts to secure control over the affairs of the state. The leader of this faction was Maham Anga, Akbar's foster-mother. But in spite of her important position in Akbar's affections it would be an exaggeration to say that Akbar allowed the "monstrous regimen of unscrupulous women" to hold sway over his judgement. The misdeeds of the foster-mother's son, Adham Khan, were tolerated only to a point and when the time came for retribution Akbar did not hesitate to inflict the highest penalty on the lady's dear son.

Akbar's long career of half a century was evenly divided in warfare and in pursuing matters of spiritual and cultural interest. From 1558 to 1576 he attempted the conquest of northern India. By 1580 he had brought under his control the north-west frontier areas and between 1598 and 1601 the conquest of the Deccan was undertaken. From time to time Akbar had to crush the numerous rebellions in different parts of the country and also defeat the disloyal acts of his ministers and the unfilial acts of his son Salim. By 1592 the rich province of Gujarat was annexed to the empire and by a wise policy the Rajputs were conciliated and won over into the service of the empire. Akbar's numerous wars clearly show that he was out to build a mighty empire and in this imperial march no resistance was to be tolerated. The conquest of the forest-kingdom of Gondawana in 1564 was an act of "mere aggression, wholly unprovoked and devoid of all justification other than the lust for conquest and plunder". There ruled the gallant queen Durgavati who was loved by her people for whose welfare she had done much. The annexation of her kingdom did not mean the introduction of better government there. The wholesale massacre of the population of Chitor after the fall of the fortress reflects a vindictive streak in Akbar's character and the attack on Chandbibi of Ahmadnagar is on par

with his conduct in relation to the kingdom of Gondawana. His dealings concerning the capture of the fortress of Asirgadh and the duplicity shown in the course of the annexation of Kashmir in 1586 are serious stains on the brilliant record of Akbar as a warrior.

Akbar's military activities left a deep impress on his system of government. As it has been observed : "His court, even when quartered in a city, was a camp, and his camp was a travelling city". But in spite of this military orientation his administration was far in advance of anything seen in the immediate past or to be witnessed for a long time to come. Six years after his accession he abolished the practice of enslaving the prisoners of war, a relic of the Central Asian and Turkish past. His revenue officer Todar Mall created a system of revenue administration which has almost become legendary for its qualities of equity and justice. In 1575-76 the imperial administration was established on a stable foundation with the grouping of territories into well-demarcated provinces and districts and the constitution of officers in well-defined grades. The empire now employed 1,600 salaried officers and by 1577, with the appointment of a Master of Mint, a much-needed currency reform was brought about. The decennial revenue assessment gave the peasants security and provided an incentive to increased effort. But in spite of this apparent prosperity the country suffered from famines. Akbar, of course, did everything possible to relieve distress but his measures fell far short of the needs imposed by the calamity.

Akbar not only successfully accomplished the political unification of a large part of the country but also gave his empire a just and efficient administration. At the very outset he was firmly convinced that no empire could last if it lacked the willing consent of the Hindus who formed an overwhelming majority of the population. His relations with the Rajputs were of the utmost importance in the development and administration of the Mughal empire. In winning the friendship of this hardy and intelligent race Akbar showed the highest qualities of statesmanship and wisdom. Proud men like Raja Bhagwandas and Mansingh, Todar Mall and a host of others regarded it as high honour to enter the imperial service and in their own way they

gave their best to the service. This friendship was strengthened with matrimonial ties. In January 1562 Akbar married Bhar Mall's daughter, the princess of Amber, and this event marked a far-reaching change in Mughal policy. Later Akbar's son Salim was married to Man Bai, a scion of the same family. Besides Mansingh Akbar also secured the services of Hindu stalwarts like Todar Mall and Raja Birbal. Birbal was born at Kalpi in 1528. He first served Raja Bhagwandas before joining the imperial service. Birbal has almost become a legendary figure, well-known for his ready wit and brilliant conversational powers.

The wise and conciliatory policy pursued by Akbar towards the Rajputs paid handsome dividends. Leaders like Mansingh devoted their best efforts to the extension of the empire while Todar Mall gave it a just and equitable revenue system which was to become the model for the ages to come. Akbar's large empire was divided into sixteen provinces each having its own revenue, police and judicial officials. The principal imperial officials were the prime minister, the finance minister, the chief pay-master and the chief of the ecclesiastical department. All these officials were the emperor's personal nominees and held office during his pleasure. Theoretically the system of government was autocratic wherein the wish of the sovereign was supreme and the counsels of the ministers had only recommendatory force. But Akbar's administration was far more responsive to public opinion than any other regime either immediately before him or after his time. Akbar himself took considerable personal interest in his administration and was always accessible to his subjects.

Akbar was one of the few Indian kings to maintain a close contact with the western world. The presence of the Portuguese and their predatory activities constantly irked him. But he was curious about them and their religion and received as many as three Jesuit missions to his court. In 1605 he interviewed Mildenhall, an Englishman, who had come to India to explore the possibilities of English trade with India.

In spite of his long preoccupation with war and conquest Akbar was constantly in search of spiritual enlightenment. Six years after his accession he paid a visit to the tomb of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti at Ajmer and his annual pilgrimage

to Ajmer continued over many years. On a number of occasions he is reported to have experienced spiritual illumination. His liberal temperament made him seek truth through a comparative study of differing religious systems and he fully availed himself of the opportunities of listening to discourses of learned and holy men, Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Sufis and Christian. In the field of practical policy he adopted liberal measures in his treatment of the Hindus. In 1563 he abolished the pilgrim tax at Mathura and a year later followed this with the abolition of the *Jezia* or the poll tax levied on the Hindus by Muslim kings. The Sufi influences on his young mind led him into mysticism which sought concourse with like-minded spirits of all faiths. In 1575 was built the famous Hall of Worship where, in subsequent years, discourses on different religions were given and debates held on some of the finer points of theology and metaphysics. To these debates were invited Muslims, Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians and Christians and Akbar took a great personal interest in the proceedings. The debates continued to be held until 1582. By 1580 he had come to the conclusion that he may declare himself as the sole arbiter in religious disputes and this is embodied in his famous "infallibility decree". By 1582 Akbar ceased to be an active follower of Islam in its rigid form and in the same year he proceeded to formulate a religion of his own called *Din-i-Ilahi* or the "Universal Faith". This was based on points of agreement from all the great religions and contained theories freely drawn from Jainism and Zoroastrianism, Hinduism and Christianity. From Jainism he learnt his dislike of meat and in one of his "Happy Sayings", recorded by his chronicler Abul Fazl, he is reported to have remarked that "it is not right that a man should make his stomach the grave of animals". In spite of this, however, Akbar continued his usual diet for reasons of habit and fear that his vegetarian example, if widely imitated, may prove to be a source of misery to the people !

As stated before, Akbar invited as many as three separate Christian missions to his court. These came from Goa and were headed by prominent Jesuit priests. To a certain extent the Jesuit dignitaries misunderstood Akbar's purpose in inviting them to his court. Akbar's purpose is well-elucidated in one of

his sayings to the effect that "discourses on philosophy have such a charm for me that they distract me from all else, and I forcibly restrain myself from listening to them lest the necessary duties of the hour should be neglected". That Akbar was genuinely interested in learning all he could about Christianity is beyond doubt and in conformity with his religious beliefs he practised a policy of utmost tolerance towards all faiths. In 1601 he went so far as officially to permit the conversion of Muslims to Christianity which was a bold and daring act considering the fact that such an action would have been unthinkable not only to his predecessors but also to his contemporaries in Spain and Portugal from where the Jesuit fathers came. Besides Akbar had also some political interest in the coming of the Catholic priests as he desired information about Goa. The Jesuits, on their part, had not come solely on a mission of saving the imperial soul for they were as much interested in the cause of the Roman Catholic Church as in the Portuguese imperial power. But while Akbar perfectly understood the mixed role of the Catholic missionaries the Jesuit fathers expressed unmitigated disappointment, if not disgust, at the result of their labours. Akbar was interested in Christianity as a student of comparative religion and was bent on discovering the truth for himself according to his own light.

Of the *Din-i-Ilahi* a brief notice may suffice. Primarily it was the outcome of Akbar's dissatisfaction with many of the features of the prevailing faiths. He had been influenced by Sufism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity and appreciated many of the underlying ideas in all these systems. By temperament a mystic and by circumstances an eclectic, Akbar tried to formulate a creed which would include all the good points from the diverse faiths with which he was familiar. The cornerstone of this new creed was belief in God, the merciful and just. The adherents were organised into an order of which Akbar himself was the head. This new religion prescribed the observance of certain rites, abstinence and moderation in food and drink and practice according to the moral precept acceptable to all faiths. A faith like this which was the creation of Akbar's meditative and inventive mind was far diffe-

rent from the stuff of which the world's religions are made and barely survived the originator's death.

The long and distinguished career of Akbar was coming to an end as the 16th century ended and the 17th began. On the 21st of September 1604, he fell seriously ill. At this time there was bruited a plot to supersede Salim but it failed. On the 27th of October 1605, at the age of 62, Akbar died under circumstances so suspicious as to warrant consideration of the possibility of slow poisoning. An outstanding career had come to an end.

Akbar's personality was of the most complex order. He was, by origin, "much more a Turk than a Mongol or Mogul and his mother was a Persian". Many of his trusted friends and lieutenants were Hindus and his marriage with the daughter of Raja Bhar Mall in 1562 became almost a turning point in his life. The son of this union was Salim who became his successor under the name of Jahangir. Salim was born in 1569 and was married in 1584 to Man Bai, the daughter of Raja Bhagwandas of Jaipur. In 1600 Salim rose in open rebellion against his father and it was not until 1604 that reconciliation between him and his imperial father was worked out. Akbar's other son Murad was born in 1570 and was the son of the widow of Bairam Khan whom Akbar had married. Murad died in 1599 as a result of excessive indulgence in drink. Akbar's third son Daniyal was born in 1572 and in his youth worked as a viceroy of the Deccan. Like Murad he too was a victim of intemperance and died in 1604. A man of engaging presence and literary disposition Daniyal was his father's favourite and his death broke Akbar's heart. Akbar's last years were indeed very sad. His mother Hamida Bano Begum also died in 1604 and the loss of Abul Fazl at the hands of assassins hired by Salim was the cruellest blow of all. Akbar had three daughters of whom the eldest, Khanum Sultana, was born in 1569. The other two were Shukrunnissa Begum and Aram Bano Begum. Among his intimate friends may be mentioned Abul Fazl, the son of Sheikh Mubarak, a learned but unorthodox theologian. Abul's elder brother Faizi entered the imperial service but was more interested in literary activities than statecraft and was quite content

with his none too important position of a commander of 400. Abul Fazl came to the emperor's notice with his commentary on the *Koran* in 1574 and eventually became a commander of 4,000. He exercised great influence over his patron and is the author of the *Akbar Namah* ("Life of Akbar") and the *Ain-e-Akbari* ("The Institutes of Akbar") which are excellent sources for the history of the period. Abul Fazl, as mentioned earlier, was murdered in 1602.

Akbar's long career of nearly half a century was remarkable both for what it achieved immediately and for the rich legacy it left for posterity. Of his personality several interesting descriptions are recorded both by his son and his courtier, Abul Fazl, as well as by the Jesuit priest, Fr. Monserrate. Jahangir says, Akbar was of "middle height, of a wheat-coloured complexion, with black eyes and eye-brows. His beauty was rather of form than of face, and he was powerfully built, with a broad chest and long arms. On his left nostril was a fleshy mole, very becoming, of the size of split pea, which physiognomists understood to be an augury of great wealth and glory. His voice was extremely loud, and in discourse and narration he was witty and animated." Father Monserrate, the Jesuit priest, writes of Akbar that he "was in face and stature fit for the dignity of King, so that anybody, even at the first glance, would easily recognise him as the King. His shoulders were broad, and his legs slightly bandy, and adapted to riding. His complexion was fair, but slightly suffused with a darker tint. He carried his head slightly inclined to one side, towards the right shoulder; his brow was broad and open, and his eyes sparkled as does the sea when lighted by the sun. His eye-lids were heavy, as are those of the Samaritans, the Chinese, the Niphonians, and nearly all Asiatics of the more northern regions. His eye-brows were narrow, and his nose was of middle size and drooping, but had a high bridge. His nostrils were expanded as though he were enraged, and on the left one he had a wart, which met the upper lip. He shaved his beard, but not his moustache, following the custom of young Turks before they assume the full costume of manhood, who, after they have taken the virile Toga, cherish and arrange their beards. Unlike his forefathers, he did not shave his head, nor did he wear a cap, but bound his

head with a turban, which, they say, he did in imitation of the Indian custom, in order to conciliate them. He dragged his left leg slightly, as though he were lame in it, though he had not been injured in the foot. He has in his body, which is very well made, and neither thin and meagre nor fat and gross, much courage and strength. When he laughs he is distorted, but when he is tranquil and serene he has noble mein and great dignity. In his wrath he is majestic."

Akbar was born at a time when his father was in exile and his childhood was spent in the uncertainty incidental to his father's adventures in the political wilderness. Possessed of great strength and determination Akbar built a vast empire on the uncertain legacy left by his father; his arms were carried from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea and his commands were obeyed all over the country, from Kabul to the Deccan. He battled with adversity with firm courage and turned every opportunity of conquest to his permanent advantage and prestige. There was a nobility of character in him despite the fact that his record was besmirched on a few occasions by the deliberate practice of duplicity and deceit. Though unable to read or write he was perhaps the best informed man of his age and was blessed with a prodigious memory. He loved the sports of the field and performed many incredible feats of strength and valour. He was fond of drinking though he seldom carried it to an excess and he was also in the habit of taking opium. Warm in his friendliness he could be vindictive in wrath. His restless mind made him familiar with problems of philosophy as well as statecraft. Living in an age of great faith and religious devotion he thought of himself as an exalted being and essayed the impossible task of founding his own religion. He was a firm believer in the virtue of displaying his wisdom in action and to him must go the credit of creating, for the first time, conditions under which the precept of equality before the law could become a frequent practice.

Apart from being a great conqueror and an equally great administrator Akbar was also a man of great culture. At his court was witnessed the burgeoning of the Medieval Indian Renaissance when painters like Daswan and Baswan, singers like Tansen, *bel esprit* like Birbal and financial wizards like

Todar Mal lived and worked for this great emperor. Of his interest in great buildings Abul Fazl reports that his mind delighted in dressing his fancy in "the garment of stone and clay". His time was one of prosperity and peace and the English traveller Fitch describes Agra and Fatehpur, as "either of them much greater than London and very populous". Father Monserrate speaks of Lahore in 1581 as a city second to none in Europe or Asia. In normal years, the cost of living was so low that "a man could feed himself adequately for a cost of from a penny to two pence a day". Akbar loved wealth and it is estimated that when he died he left behind him as much as would be worth today over 200 million pounds sterling or 600 million dollars. Under his benevolent rule the dormant energies of the people were awakened and channelled into great constructive effort and it is more than a coincidence that the great Hindi poet Tulsidas lived and wrote his immortal epic on the *Ramayana* during this time. Indeed, Akbar, as Vincent Smith states, "was a born king of men, with a rightful claim to rank as one of the greatest sovereigns known to history. That claim rests securely on the basis of his extraordinary natural gifts, his original ideas, and his magnificent achievements." He left to his heirs not only a great empire to govern but also a great ideal to emulate.

The career of Jahangir, Akbar's son and successor, stands in somewhat of a sharp contrast to the glorious reign of the Grand Moghul. Jahangir succeeded his father on the 24th of October 1605 and ruled until 1627. He managed to keep intact the vast empire his father had bequeathed him. Jahangir had the advantage of a liberal education and was endowed with a sturdy common sense which could help him easily grasp the essentials of even the most complicated situation. But by nature he was indolent and pleasure-loving and these qualities came more and more in prominence as his reign progressed from year to year.

Soon after his accession Jahangir made a few important appointments which, with one exception, were wise. The exception was in the case of Raja Bir Singh Bundela, the murderer of Abul Fazl, who was raised to the rank of a commander of 3,000. The appointment of the Persian, Ghias Beg, as revenue

minister with the title of Itimad-ud-dawlah and the rank of a commander of 1,500, was of a far-reaching significance in the emperor's life. Ghias Beg had a daughter who was both very intelligent and beautiful and was married to one Sher Afghan. After the death of her husband the lady married Jahangir and became famous in the history of the country as Nur Jahan. Nur Jahan's brother, Asaf Khan, became a great power at the court and exercised significant influence on the turn of events later.

When Jahangir rebelled against his father he could scarcely have imagined that his own sons would emulate his example with such embarrassing effect. Jahangir had four sons, Khusrau, Parvez, Khurram and Shahryar. Khusrau was a handsome but impetuous youth and became a convenient pawn in the hands of designing nobles at the court. During the last years of Akbar's life there was a faction that supported Khusrau against Jahangir though a reconciliation was later brought about between the two. But this was short-lived as neither trusted the other and seizing a suitable opportunity Khusrau escaped from Agra and joined Hussein Beg Badakshani with his 3,000-strong cavalry at Mathura. After plundering the countryside the rebels marched to Panipat where they were joined by Abdul Rahim, a minister from Lahore. They also received the customary hospitality from the religious leader of the Sikhs, Guru Arjun Singh, who paid for this with his life later. Jahangir ordered the execution of the Sikh Guru, in itself a highly impolitic act, and with it began the undying hostility of the Sikhs towards the Mughal empire. The Sikhs, in the face of persecution, became transformed from being a peaceful religious sect into a highly militant community and delivered some of the blows which hastened the downfall of the Mughal empire in India. The imperial forces, in pursuit of the rebels, fought and defeated Khusrau at Bahrowal. Khusrau's followers were mercilessly massacred and the prince was put under arrest and humiliated. But the charm of his personality won over his gaolers and another futile plot was hatched in 1607. As a consequence Khusrau was blinded and lived a prisoner for the next eleven years. In 1617 he was given into the custody of his brother

and rival, Khurram, the future Shah Jahan, who had him murdered.

Next it was Khurram's turn to rise in rebellion. The immediate provocation for this unfilial act was seen in Nur Jahan's conduct which the prince thought was aimed against his interests. Jahangir had married Nur Jahan in 1611 and was so captivated by her charms that, as time passed, he devoted himself more and more to the pleasures of the cup and delegated all powers to the empress. It was generally believed that the empress was the real ruler, the power behind the throne. Nur Jahan, a very capable woman, loved power for its own sake. As it has been observed : "As the emperor's intellect deteriorated through his bodily indulgences and his concentration on pleasure, he was glad to leave to his wife and her advisers the task of deciding most affairs of state. His biographer records that he repeatedly said that he had bestowed the sovereignty on Nur Jahan and for himself needed nothing but a quart of wine and a pound of flesh." At first Nur Jahan favoured Khurram but later changed her mind and engaged herself in doing everything designed to harm the interests of the prince. The showdown came in 1623 when Khurram refused to proceed to Kandahar to fight the army of Shah Abbas of Persia. He rose in rebellion and mustered strong support. For a time it looked as if the empire would be rent by a civil war but the imperial troops defeated the rebels at Bilochpur, south of Delhi. Khurram was then forced to go to Asirgarh where his army began to desert him. He then turned to Malik Ambar, the astute minister of Ahmadnagar, but met with no favourable response. Another futile request to the Sultan of Golconda—and Khurram was compelled to proceed north to Orissa and Bengal which he controlled for a short time. Finally he made his peace with the emperor in March 1626 and handed over his two sons, Dara and Aurangzeb, as surety for his good behaviour. Subsequently he was sent to Nasik as a viceroy.

Besides the rebellions of his own sons Jahangir had to deal with recalcitrance from the Afghan nobles in Bengal and the hostility of the Rana of Chitor. The former were defeated in 1612 but were treated leniently and subsequently many joined the imperial service. A long campaign had to be undertaken

against Chitor but a wise policy after its submission turned the Rana into a firm ally.

In the mean while the activities of the Persian king Shah Abbas were becoming a cause for grave anxiety. The Persians coveted the possession of Kandahar and were always on the look-out for a chance to seize the prize. Foiled in their first attempt they made another in 1622, and with success. Jahangir was at this time resting in Kashmir but had to cut short his vacation to prepare for the re-conquest of Kandahar. Prince Khurram was appointed as one of the imperial commanders but, as pointed out earlier, suspecting evil design by Nur Jahan, he refused to proceed thither and rose in a short-lived rebellion. This caused a serious diversion in imperial policy and the projected re-conquest of Kandahar had to be abandoned.

The affairs in the Deccan too were none too happy. The activities of Malik Ambar, the Abyssinian general of the Nizamshahi kings of Ahmadnagar, acted as a serious foil to the expansionist aims of the Mughals. Malik Ambar was a resourceful minister and a statesman of uncommon ability. He successfully battled against the Mughal attempts to conquer the Deccan and though some success came in 1617 to the Mughals it was all too brief. But if the Deccan stood unsubdued Kangra in the Punjab surrendered after a fierce siege in 1620. This, however, was good only to bolster the Mughal prestige as economically the Punjab state had little to offer, and the conquest of Kangra was celebrated with the slaughter of a cow in the Hindu temple there. This act was in sharp contrast to Akbar's policy and showed how tenuous was the hold of the policy of religious toleration on Mughal polity.

Jahangir's intemperate habits were having their inevitable effect on his health. Even the salubrious climate of Kashmir did little to comfort the ailing emperor and on the 7th of November 1627, Jahangir died at the age of 57. A romantic but politically stagnant career had come to an end.

"Jahangir," said Sir Thomas Roe, the British Ambassador to the Mughal court, "is very affable, and of a cheerful countenance, without pride." He was a great lover of art and his fondness for the cup was proverbial. His proficiency in recognising the greatness of a work of art was such as to justify his

assertion that he could identify the work of an artist the moment he saw it even though he was not told the name of the artist. He was a great lover of nature, something of an ornithologist and a botanist and had an eye for the unusual and the quaint. Warm and affectionate in his dealings with his friends and favourites he could be ruthless towards his enemies. His love for his spouse is justly celebrated as one of the great romances of Indian history. His *memoirs* reveal him as a gentle autocrat who was a poet at heart. Intelligent, shrewd and learned, his virtues were finally set at naught by his weakness for drink.

The central figure in the history of the life and times of Jahangir was that of Nur Jahan. Nur Jahan was a woman of extraordinary talent. Of her beauty and intelligence there are eloquent descriptions. Possessed of considerable physical strength and courage she was equally at ease in hunting animals in the woods and at worsting her enemies at the court. She introduced new fashions and tastes in court life and as far as her devotion to her husband was concerned there was not the slightest doubt about her complete identification of her whole life with that of her husband's. But her ambition and her love of power proved to be her undoing. She constantly plotted and intrigued and created numerous enemies in the process. In part the rebellion of Khurram was a result of her unfriendly attitude towards the prince. In her judgement she showed a lack of discretion and though fervent in her faith and enthusiastic in its practice she scarcely made any efforts to save her husband from the excesses of his indulgence. Nay, unkind courtiers could allege that she rather encouraged him to take more and more to the cup in the hope that she could have all his power in her hands. As is stated: "Jahangir's innate fondness for pleasure was developed by Nur Jahan to a perilous extent, and if Jahangir's reign forms an inglorious period in the annals of the Mughal dynasty, she must share the responsibility in no small measure."

No account of the reign of Jahangir can be complete without a reference to the embassy of Sir Thomas Roe. At the turn of the 16th century the East India Company was established to develop the trade interests of Britain with India. The Portuguese had arrived in India much before the British made a

beginning and Portuguese rivalry was causing serious concern to the directors of the English corporation. Efforts were then made to establish direct contacts with the Mughal rulers to obtain trade concessions and commercial facilities. Captain William Hawkins was first sent to Agra during 1609-11 and though he was well received he was not successful in negotiating a treaty. His successor in this task was Sir Thomas Roe who visited Jahangir's court in 1615 as the accredited ambassador of the King of England. He was a gentleman of fine presence and engaging manners, gifted with sturdy common sense and groomed in the ways of diplomacy and it was expected that Sir Thomas Roe would succeed where Hawkins failed. After overcoming the initial difficulties in his dealings with Nur Jahan and her group, Roe eventually secured an imperial order granting some concessions to the English. His biggest rivals, however, were the Portuguese and it was not until the British could inflict a defeat on them that their position could become secure. Roe lived around the court until 1618 and the ambassador has given us a valuable and striking account of conditions in the country and at the court. The pomp and pageantry of the Mughal court impressed the observant Englishman and in the pages of his account we have some remarkable pen-portraits of characters who moved across the stage of history at this time.

CHAPTER SIX

SHAH JAHAN THE MAGNIFICENT AND AURANGZEB THE INDUSTRIOUS

JAHANGIR'S DEATH in 1627 was followed by a brief but decisive war of succession. Of his four sons Khurram was the most promising. Khusrau died at the hands of an assassin hired by Khurram in 1622 while Parvez became hopelessly decrepit at the age of 37 as a result of excessive drinking. Parvez died a year before his father. Sharhyar's claim was supported by Nur Jahan and for a short while Dawar Baksh, the son of the ill-fated Khusrau, was released from prison and proclaimed emperor by Asaf Khan, the brother of Nur Jahan. Sharhyar was defeated in a fight, blinded and imprisoned. Khurram was in the Deccan at the time of his father's death. He hurried to the north and ordered Asaf Khan to ensure that all his rivals be speedily dispatched from this world. The astute officer promptly complied with his order and Khurram was proclaimed emperor on the 6th of February 1628, as Shah Jahan. Asaf Khan was duly rewarded for his help with lavish gifts and the title of Yamin-ud-dawlah was conferred on him. Nur Jahan was politely told to retire from the affairs of the court which she did and spent her days in piety and religious devotion. She was provided with a liberal grant to enable her to distribute charity and in 1645 her eventful career came to a peaceful end.

The reason for Asaf Khan's support to Shah Jahan during the critical days when succession was in dispute was deeper than just loyalty to the Mughal throne. Asaf Khan's daughter, Arjumand Bano Begum, was married to Shah Jahan and never was a couple so devoted to each other and so understanding of each other's virtues and foibles. She became famous as Mumtaz

Mahal and when she died in 1631 Shah Jahan decided to immortalize her memory by building the magnificent Taj Mahal at Agra.

In a sense the career of Shah Jahan marks both the zenith of Mughal glory and the inevitable beginning of the end which came within a hundred years of his accession to the throne. The policy of religious toleration so successfully initiated by Akbar was now abandoned and religious intolerance and persecution of non-Muslims became increasingly frequent. His reign was also disturbed by several rebellions the first of which was by Jhujhar Singh Bundela in 1628. Jhujhar Singh was the son of Bir Singh Budela, the murderer of Abul Fazl. The whole might of the imperial army was mustered and the rebellion was crushed. The year after this came the rebellion of Khan Jahan Lodi which was also summarily dealt with.

In 1630 the New Year was celebrated with great eclat and pomp which unfortunately was followed by a severe famine in the Deccan, Gujarat and Khandesh. Pestilence followed famine and the vast countryside was rendered desolate. Efforts to relieve the distress, though prompt, were obviously inadequate and thousands died. In 1631 Shah Jahan suffered a great personal loss in the death of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. The empress was a lady of unusual accomplishments, gentle in her disposition and devoted in her love for her husband. The emperor placed the highest confidence in her judgement and allowed her full freedom to practise all those virtues of charity and generosity which she used to help all those who needed succour. Her orthodoxy undoubtedly influenced Shah Jahan who followed certain policies which eventually led to the persecution of Hindus and Christians.

In 1631-32 the activities of the Portuguese in Bengal were assuming such a form as to invite retaliation. Complaints of high-handedness, widespread traffic in slaves and religious bigotry reached Shah Jahan and Quasim Khan, the governor of Bengal, was ordered to punish the Portuguese. The result was an end to Portuguese influence in Bengal. In the same year the seige of the kingdom of Bijapur was begun and by 1633, through the use of bribery, the fortress of Daulatabad was captured. The kingdom of Ahmadnagar was also annexed

to the empire and the Mughal empire began its expansion in the south.

In the year 1632 Shah Jahan ordered an act which was symptomatic of the shape of things to come. He was told that the Hindus were building temples and this so enraged the emperor that he ordered the demolition of temples in and around Banaras. The order was enthusiastically carried out and 76 temples were razed to the ground. The Shias also came in for persecution when certain prohibitory orders were passed against them.

Jhujhar Singh rebelled once again in 1635-36 and this time he had to pay for it with his life and his wealth. Several atrocities were committed and women were captured and sent to the imperial harem. In 1636 the campaigns in the Deccan engaged the personal attention of the emperor and Bijapur and Golconda were subdued and Ahmadnagar was divided into several territories. Aurangzeb, who was now 18, was placed in charge of the province of the Deccan. The adventures in Central Asia were not so successful and even after the expenditure of millions not an inch of territory was added to the empire. The attempts made to re-conquer Kandahar failed and in all these the peculiar character of Shah Jahan played an important part. He constantly changed generals and interfered with the progress of campaigns with little reason and less success. Between 1656-58 Golconda and Bijapur were invaded again and the Mughals were able to establish their supremacy in the area for some time.

Shah Jahan is better known as a builder of magnificent monuments than as a hero and a conqueror in war. In 1634 the famous Peacock Throne was built, a jewelled phantasy in burnished gold glittering with emeralds and rubies. Millions were spent on its material and construction and it gorgeously reflected the wealth and grandeur of the great Mughal empire. As the empire declined the throne suffered theft and spoliation and was carried away by the Persian invader Nadir Shah and finally it disappeared from the chronicle of history. During 1631 and 1674 was built the great monument, the Taj Mahal, at a cost of three crores of rupees and it exists to this day as a beautiful reminder of the love of Shah Jahan for his beloved

Mumtaz Mahal, a poem in marble of undying loveliness and beauty. Shah Jahan also built other remarkable edifices like the Musamman Burz and the Moti Masjid. The capital was now transferred to Delhi and a number of new buildings were built with equal lavishness. Between 1650 and 1656 was completed the Moti Masjid and the emperor could now look around and feel justifiable pride in the grandeur of his empire and the loveliness of his own creations.

Manucci, the Italian, who visited India during the 17th century, gives a graphic description of the pomp and ceremony characteristic of court life during the time of Shah Jahan. The emperor's throne, says Manucci, "is like a table, adorned with all sorts of precious stones and flowers, in enamel and gold. There are three cushions—a large one, five spans in diameter, and circular, which serves as a support to the back, and two other square ones, one on each side ; also a most lovely mattress ; for in Turkey, and throughout the whole of Hindustan, they do not sit upon chairs, but upon carpets and mattresses, with their legs crossed. Around the throne, at the distance of one pace, are railings of gold, of the height of one cubit, within which no one enters except the king's sons. Before they enter they come and, facing the king, go through their obeisance, then enter the palace and come out by the same door from which the king issued. Arriving there, they again make obeisance, and upon a sign from the king they take their seat in the same enclosure, but at the foot of, and on one side of, the throne. Thereupon the pages appear with the umbrella, parasol, betel, spittoon, sword and fly-brusher.

"... The hall in which stood the royal seat is adorned with twenty highly decorated pillars, which support the roof. This roof stretches far enough to cover the spaces enclosed with the silver railing, and is hidden half-way by an awning of brocade. Further, a canopy over the king's throne is upheld by four golden pillars."

In 1657 the emperor fell ill and went to Agra. This was a signal for one of the bitterest wars of succession in Mughal history. The contenders in this sordid drama were his sons, Dara, the emperor's favourite, Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad. The emperor's illness gave rise to dreadful rumours and a war

of succession was duly joined. Aurangzeb defeated Dara in the battle of Samugarh in May 1658 and marched on Agra. The emperor was imprisoned by his own son and for the next eight years had to sigh away his life in sorrowful musings. The only consolation for him during these years was the companionship of his daughter and the sight of his wife's mausoleum, the Taj Mahal. He was treated with great indignity but, while drinking the cup of sorrow to the dregs, the emperor never lost his dignity. The victorious Aurangzeb contrived to get Murad drunk and effect his arrest. Murad was killed in 1661. Dara was made captive, disgraced and executed in 1659. His son Suleiman Shukoh was captured in 1661, imprisoned in the Gwalior fort and poisoned to death. Shuja was defeated in the battle of Khajwa in 1659 and he fled to Arakan where he was murdered by some members of the primitive tribes in the area. Aurangzeb had thus eliminated all his rivals and declared himself as the emperor Alamgir in the month of July 1658.

From the Peacock Throne to the prison in Agra was a long and painful march for the emperor Shah Jahan the Magnificent. But he bore his suffering with fortitude and as death came at the age of 74, on the 22nd of January 1676, the emperor could look back philosophically on a lifetime of happiness and misery, wealth and penury, faith and perfidy and draw his own sombre moral about the vicissitudes of human life. Perhaps in a reflective mood he could recollect the history of his house and wonder what the end was going to be. He had waged wars though he had failed to make significant conquests. He had amassed wealth and lavished it on some of the most beautiful creations of all time—the Peacock Throne, the Taj Mahal and the palaces. He had been the master of a vast empire and now he was a prisoner of his own offspring. But perhaps he could find solace in the realization of the fact that when all else was forgotten people, in ages hence, would remember him as the king who built the most beautiful monument to the memory of his beloved wife.

Amidst such reflections full of sorrow nobly borne and anger that was ineffective Shah Jahan ended his days. His mind "was orderly but not inventive". His diligence was praised but his military career was a failure. He had collected jewels and

riches and ruled over a large empire and it could only be said of him that it was not through his faults alone that the empire disappeared within half a century of his death.

With Shah Jahan securely locked in his prison Aurangzeb began his long career. He had waded through a sea of fraternal blood to the imperial throne and history was to record the verdict that he was also instrumental in robbing that throne of much of its dignity, grandeur and strength. After his formal accession on the 5th of June 1659, Aurangzeb embarked upon a thorough examination of the administrative system he had inherited. He already had a long experience of war and administration in the Deccan and had shown great understanding, skill and craftiness in his dealings with enemies and friends alike. As a conciliatory gesture he ordered the abolition of several taxes and as a measure of economy he stopped the celebration of the New Year's day, an occasion of lavishness and splendour in days gone by. As an orthodox Sunni Muslim he abhorred lax ways and morals both among the nobles and the common people and to improve manners he appointed censors of public morals.

In the matter of administration of the different provinces Aurangzeb moved with cautious wisdom. He had received valuable help from Mir Jumla, the Deccani nobleman, and Shayasta Khan, his maternal uncle, but was afraid of their ability and possible designs for personal power and had them sent away to distant places. Indeed, suspicion was the hallmark of Aurangzeb's character and it was this that was going to lose him friends and alienate people.

The major part of Aurangzeb's career was spent in fighting the Marathas. The rise of the Marathas and the transformation in the character of the Sikhs from a peaceful agricultural community into a martial class were the two factors that played an important part in sending the Mughal empire to its ultimate downfall. The Marathas lived in a region hemmed in by mountain ranges of the Sahyadris with the restless Arabian Sea as their background. The soil they tilled was not rich though the climate was bracing and these gave the Marathas a wiry but vigorous physique. Centuries before they came on the historic scene the region in which they lived was undergoing a religious

and cultural transformation. Their saint-poets like Ramdas and Tukaram had sung hymns which laid emphasis on earnestness in devotion to God and nobility of spirit in the face of the most depressing circumstances. They lived a life of simplicity and austerity but when the occasion arose they displayed those qualities of faith and character which finally led them along the path of dominion over a major part of India in the 18th century. Many of the Maratha nobles had the opportunity of studying the administrative system of the Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan first hand and while doing this they had carefully noted its good points and drawbacks. The cult of *Bhakti* (devotion to God), with its disregard for caste distinctions, had given them a new vision and their land was ready for a quick transformation, awaiting only an inspiring leadership which was not long in coming.

Among the Maratha nobles who had learned their first lessons in statecraft at the courts of the Sultans of the Deccan, the most outstanding was Shahji Bhonsle who gradually became so important as to be a kingmaker at Ahmadnagar. He had an unsuccessful encounter with the armies of Shah Jahan in 1636 and this forced him out of the Maratha country but secured for him the post of a leading general of the Adilshahi government. His son Shivaji became one of the greatest soldiers and statesmen of Indian history. Shivaji was born at Shivneri on the 10th of April 1627, and spent his early youth under the watchful eye of his mother Jijabai and his tutor, Dadoji Konddev. Jijabai instilled in him a love for his religion and a burning desire to strike out for the independence of his own people. Gathering round him a band of loyal followers from among the peasants of Maharashtra Shivaji made a beginning of his eventful career with the capture of the fort of Torna in 1646. This was followed by a series of successes resulting in the capture of Chakan and many other famous forts. Through these campaigns Shivaji's aims were being declared to the world at large and these caused concern at the courts of the Sultans of the Deccan. Shivaji was a master of guerrilla warfare and his roving bands ranged far and wide. The Sultan of Bijapur sent one of his leading generals, Afzal Khan, to crush Shivaji but the Khan was de-

feated and killed in an encounter which was obviously planned by the victim as a trap for Shivaji.

The complete rout of the army of Bijapur emboldened Shivaji to extend his operations over a wider area. Now it was the turn of the Mughals to suffer from the attacks of the Marathas and to deal with this menace Aurangzeb sent his uncle, Shayasta Khan, who occupied Poona. In 1663 the Mughal Khan was surprised by Shivaji in his camp and the Khan lost a thumb in the brief encounter that followed. In 1664 Shivaji sacked the port of Surat and repeated his exploit the next year, carrying off enormous booty. These attacks invited retaliation from the Mughal emperor whose armies closed in on Shivaji's territory. The result was the treaty of Purandhar whereby Shivaji lost 23 of his forts and agreed to visit the Mughal capital at Agra. In 1666 Shivaji went to Agra where he was imprisoned by Aurangzeb. But Shivaji escaped and returned to the Deccan and, by 1670, war was, once again, renewed. In the month of October 1670 he raided Surat for the third time and four years later Shivaji was formally declared as the king of the Marathas at a colourful coronation ceremony. During 1677-78 Shivaji turned southward and captured Jinji and Vellore but death cut short his remarkable career on the 4th of April 1680, at the age of 53.

The career of Shivaji was truly remarkable. Beginning as a small fief-holder under the Sultan of Bijapur he built an independent kingdom comprising the Western Ghats area and the Konkan between Kalyan and Goa, spreading eastwards to Baglana and southwards through the Nasik and Poona districts. In the south his conquests covered western Karnatak extending from Belgaum to the Bellary district in Andhra. As a leader in war he was unrivalled and as an administrator he showed uncommon vision and skill. He gave to his people an ideal worth sacrificing their lives for and out of dust he created a people that was to write its history in striking letters in the annals of India. In his personal conduct he showed a willingness to live up to the high ideals he had preached and even his worst enemies readily admitted his sense of chivalry and justice, his tolerance towards opposing religious systems and his veneration for the holy wherever it existed. Fighting against the

bigotry of Aurangzeb he seldom forgot the virtue of tolerance and his code of conduct, whether in war or peace, was always informed by a spirit of morality and justice.

A year before the death of Shivaji Aurangzeb had turned his attention to the Rajput state of Mewar. But his mighty horde failed to crush the Rajput urge for independence and his fanaticism provoked the revolt of the religious sect of the Satnamis in 1674. A year after this, in 1675, Aurangzeb contrived the senseless and brutal murder of Guru Tegh Singh, the spiritual leader of the Sikhs, inviting the undying wrath of that community. But his armies were successful in the Deccan where Bijapur and Golconda were annexed in 1686-87. The war against the Marathas continued and Sambhaji, the son and successor of Shivaji, was taken prisoner and executed in 1688-89. But the Marathas continued the struggle under the leadership of their queen Tarabai and remained, unto the last, unconquered and resolute in their determination to be free from Mughal tyranny. Aurangzeb had won many battles against the Marathas but as he lay dying in 1707 he knew that he had lost the war. Amidst war and destruction Aurangzeb passed away at Ahmadnagar on the 20th of February 1707, and was buried at Daulatabad, in the former Hyderabad State.

Aurangzeb was the last of the great Mughals. As a soldier and as a general he had given ample proof of his exceptional ability. In his personal habits he was simple to the point of being austere. He suffered from none of the vices to which his predecessors were subject and as an administrator he strove to act in the best interests of his subjects according to the best of his ability and understanding. He was devoted to the practice of his faith and was deeply learned in its tenets. His moral standards were high and he always considered himself as a mentor and censor for the vast and teeming millions of his subjects. His treatment of his father and his fratricidal wars will ever remain a dark stain on his honour. But when all allowances are made for his virtues the historian has to record his unfavourable verdict on Aurangzeb. His fanaticism, his ruthlessness bordering on barbarism, his suspicious nature and parsimonious habits, all marked him out as the very antithesis of enlightened rulers like Akbar. Of artistic tastes he could

boast little. In the 11th year of his reign he banned music at his court and ordered the dancing girls to choose between wedlock and forced exile. His bigotry was proverbial in its crudity and the list of temples destroyed under his orders is long indeed. He treated the Hindus with especial severity and this brought about the end of the Mughal empire. The Jats, Sikhs, Satnamis and Marathas cried out for revenge and the Rajputs lost all their former enthusiasm to serve the Mughal cause as they became alienated by his acts of hostility. In 1707 as he lay dying Aurangzeb could claim a vast empire but little of it was to survive and perhaps he knew it. In his hands the Mughal empire had become an armed missionary institution, a huge engine of oppression for millions of those whose faith was not Islam. He was no political genius though he was industrious and his piety had for its background some of the cruellest acts history has to record.

Following Aurangzeb's death was a war of succession in which two of his sons and three grandsons lost their lives. The victor Bahadur Shah ruled for a brief period of five years and his death in 1712 was followed by another war of succession. The emperors who now sat on the throne of the great Akbar were mere puppets in the hands of designing politicians and corruption, vice and cruelty completed the picture of demoralization. The fiction of the Mughal emperor was kept alive by interested parties as late as 1857 but it was clear to all concerned that the great Mughal empire was already a period of past history.

For 181 years, from 1526 to 1707, ruled six great kings who built up and maintained an empire which covered an area from Afghanistan to Mysore and from Saurashtra to Assam. From 1707 to 1806 ruled 11 kings who stood in sharp contrast to these great Mughals. It looked as if the House of Timur had spent all its force and the inevitable end had to come.

The Mughal empire had come and gone. During its heyday it was a symbol of might and majesty, of wealth and refinement, good government and spiritual adventure. For its life of 181 years it could show magnificent monuments like the Taj Mahal at Agra and innumerable other buildings scattered across the length and breadth of northern India. Introduced as an exotic

plant from the arid wastes of Central Asia the Mughal empire struck deep roots in the Indian soil and produced some of the most remarkable personalities of Indian history. As the Mughals left the stage of history a host of claimants made a scramble for power. Among these were the Marathas, the Nizam, the Sikhs and the French and the British. The security of an empire had yielded place to constant warfare and it was not until a century later that India could know of peace. History was taking confused strides and the country had entered a new age.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE STRUGGLE FOR PARAMOUNTCY

I

AS AURANGZEB breathed his last in Ahmadnagar on the 20th of February, 1707, a violent storm raged in the town. The storm seems to have been prophetic of things to come. As Lane-Poole puts it : " As some Imperial corpse, preserved for ages in its dread seclusion, crowned and armed and still majestic, yet falls to dust at the mere breath of heaven, so fell the Empire of the Mughals when the great name that guarded it was no more." With the death of Aurangzeb began a great political revolution involving the complete disintegration of the grand edifice built by six generations of tireless effort by remarkable rulers from Babar to Aurangzeb. From this revolution were to rise, as offspring of a religious and regional nationalism, the two powerful states of the Marathas and the Sikhs. Then there were the semi-independent states ruled over by the Nizam in the Deccan and the Nawabs of Bengal and Oudh. All these were manifestations of a bitter struggle for paramountcy which lasted for nearly a century and a half during the course of which as many as 23 major wars and innumerable minor campaigns were fought all over India. The country was in the grip of political convulsions and hardly a year passed without some war being fought in some part of the country. A great empire was in the process of disintegration and with it Indian society was subjected to rapid social, economic and cultural changes.

In this contest for supremacy a revolution was at work which influenced the destiny of nations flung across two continents. On the one hand there was the struggle between the indigenous

powers like the Marathas and the Nizam both of whom had the same economic and technological background, namely, that of the pre-capitalistic and pre-industrial stage. If the struggle had been restricted to such contestants then the line of national political development would have followed the pattern of the past in that one of the contestants after having emerged triumphant would have established a system of imperial administration with which the country was fairly conversant. The Mughals might have been replaced by the Marathas who could have brought into being a different political orientation without profoundly affecting the economic basis of society immediately. But the situation was complicated by the intrusion of a totally new factor. This was the revolution on the high seas and the rise of mercantilism and capitalism in Europe.

Towards the end of the 15th century, roughly a quarter of a century before the formal establishment of the Mughal empire in India, new forces were at work in the history of the Western world. In 1492, when Babar, the future Mughal emperor of India, was just nine years old, Christopher Columbus had sailed the Atlantic Ocean and reached the New World. Six years after the discovery of the New World Vasco Da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached Calicut. These two events were to shape the history of the world in totally new dimensions. Vasco Da Gama had knocked on a hitherto closed door of the Indian sub-continent and had forced it open. His fleet had heralded a new era in the politics of the Indian ocean, a politics based on naval power, a phenomenon entirely new to Indian experience. Heretofore all the invaders who had made suzerainty of the land their objective had trekked across the north-western frontiers of the country. The Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Huns, Arabs, Turks, Mongols and Mughals were essentially land-powers. It is true that the Arabs were excellent navigators and controlled the ocean lanes to India and the East for centuries. Nor was the sea unfamiliar to the people of India themselves. Through the centuries, before the coming of the Arabs, Indian sailors had sailed the seas and influenced the commercial, economic and cultural life of south-east Asia. The imprint of this influence still exists in the cultural patterns of life across the vast regions stretching from Burma to Indonesia.

The Arabs captured this shipping and were in their turn displaced by the Western sea power.

Vasco Da Gama was cordially received by the Zamorin of Calicut and after the initial conflicts the Portuguese were able to establish their trading posts and factories on the western sea-board. The Portuguese were determined to exercise a virtual monopoly over the sea-borne traffic in the Arabian Sea area and this involved them in a struggle against the Arabs. The superior ships of the Portuguese swept the Arab shipping off the seas, and by 1505 the Portuguese position in India was important enough to warrant the appointment of Fransisco D'Almeida as Governor of the Portuguese colonies in India. His successor was Alphonso D'Albuquerque, the most outstanding personality in Indo-Portuguese history. He consolidated the gains made by his predecessors and during his time (1509-1515) Goa finally became the centre of Portuguese power in the country. He encouraged the growth of trading colonies, favoured inter-racial marriages, built strong forts at strategic points and induced the native merchants to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Portuguese over the Indian territorial waters. The rise of the empire of Vijayanagar brought the Portuguese rich trade and by 1530, the year Babar died, the Portuguese had become a territorial power in India. The Portuguese not only prevented the Arab commercial shipping on the seas but also interfered with the pilgrim traffic to Mecca. This brought them into recurring conflict with the Mughals. In 1534 the base on the island of Diu off the coast of the peninsula of Saurashtra was acquired and a year later Daman, near Bombay, was occupied. Akbar, Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb and the Marathas tried to dislodge them from their strongholds but all of them realized to their chagrin that without adequate naval force this was not possible and the Portuguese could not be controlled merely by land-expeditions. What finally eclipsed the Portuguese advance in India was the turn in their fortunes in Europe. The entry of the Dutch into the Indian Ocean area meant a serious threat to their monopoly and the fall of the Vijayanagar empire seriously affected their trade. The rise of the Maratha power also blocked their landward expansion. In 1665 they were driven out of Ceylon and within a century they were

eliminated from the list of contenders for the paramountcy of India.

The failure of the Portuguese was due to a variety of reasons. They had primarily tried to establish "an oceanic sovereignty of trade as distinguished from a continental sovereignty of possession". The Spanish hegemony over Portugal led to the neglect of Portuguese interests in Asia while the growth of the Dutch and English maritime activities proved ruinous to their interests. In their relations with Indian powers the Portuguese were particularly inept. Their religious bigotry and zeal for persecution of the non-Catholic population drew against them the ire of the local Hindu and Muslim powers. Forced conversions, the demolition of Hindu temples and their conversion into Catholic churches, the institution of the Inquisition and the *auto da fe* were practices particularly revolting to the Indian mind.

The Dutch began their activities in the East with the foundation of their East India Company in 1592. Between 1598 and 1602 as many as 62 Dutch ships sailed to the Malay Archipelago. In 1602 was formed the United Dutch Company with a capital of over £ 540, 000 and vested with important powers of waging war and signing peace treaties, maintaining armies and establishing forts in all the countries between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan. In the same year they appeared in Ceylon and their struggle against the Portuguese began. In 1604 they signed a treaty with the Zamorin of Calicut declaring their intent to drive the Portuguese out of Malabar and the rest of India. A year later factories were founded at Masulipatam on the eastern coast and at Petapoli (Nizampatam) in the kingdom of Golconda. Their main interests, however, were centred in the East Indies where their progress was spectacular. The Indian stations were always considered as "feeder" posts and in 1619 Coen captured Jacatra and founded Batavia on its ruins. In India there were flourishing factories at Surat, Ahmedabad, Agra, Kasimbazar and Patna. Their position, however, became difficult after the Anglo-Dutch war of 1781 and by 1825 they had lost Ceylon to the English. Their pre-occupation with the East Indies made it difficult for them to spread out their interests in India and

the English gradually displaced them from the country. They had played a significant part in the destruction of the Portuguese power in the East and their factories, with rare exceptions, were orderly and disciplined establishments. Their role in Indian history is of marginal import.

The activities of the Danes and the Swedes need only a passing mention. The Danish East India Company was set up in 1616 and this was followed by another company in 1670. But the Danish factories were withdrawn in 1714 and all the territories held by them were sold to the English East India Company in 1845. A Swedish East India Company was formed in 1731 but it never became important in the commercial and political history of the times.

The story of the English East India Company is one of the great romances of world history. Founded in 1600 it made an unpretentious beginning. In 1608 came the *Hector* with Captain William Hawkins on board carrying a letter from King James I to the Mughal Emperor requesting permission to establish trading posts in India. The English task was not at all easy for the Portuguese were formidable rivals. For the English sailors "to reach India was to sail into a nest of wasps; they sailed as poachers and pirates and so were without the law, and the navigation was all sheer guess-work". It was not until the English had inflicted a severe defeat on the Portuguese in a naval engagement at "Swalley Hole" off Surat that their position was secure. We have already referred to the embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the court of Jahangir in 1615. Roe, then, warned the English to seek profit "at sea and in quiet trade; for without controversy it is an error to affect garrisons and land wars in India". At the outset the English began planting their factories at Masulipatam (1611) and Surat (1613) and later at Ahmedabad and Agra, Hariharpur in Orissa and Balasore in Bengal. The Anglo-Portuguese accords of 1635 and 1645 eliminated the danger of frequent and costly wars between the two nations. In 1639 a strip of territory was secured and subsequently Madraspatam was built there. In 1665 another historic land-mark, the island of Bombay, was acquired from the Portuguese and was formally occupied in 1667 becoming, in a short time, the most important English stronghold on

the western coast. In 1690 was established a settlement at Hooghly in Bengal and this was fortified six years later with the permission of the Nawab of Bengal. This was Fort William around which grew modern Calcutta. As early as 1684 the Company had come to the conclusion that in the troubled state of political conditions in India it was necessary to fortify their settlements. The Company felt that their primary aim was to seek trade and security, "not conquest which the Dutch have aimed at. We dare not trade boldly nor leave great stocks.... where we have not the security of a fort". Their early successes in Bengal and Bombay at fortification of their trading posts brought to them the conviction that the "days of 'fenceless factories' were over". The fortified factory became indistinguishable from the fortified garrison and proved to be the "thin end of the wedge" which was soon to cleave the entire country into segments to be annexed at leisure.

There was also a slow but equally certain change in the aims of the Company. By 1689 the discerning minds among the servants of the Company had begun writing : "The increase of our revenue is no less the subject of our care and must always be yours, as much as our trade...., 'Tis that must make us a nation in India. Without that we are but as a great number of interlopers, united by His Majesty's Royal Charter, fit only to trade where no body of power thinks it their interest to prevent us." But the Mughal empire was apparently still strong —which made the English progress in India neither spectacular nor substantial. Their settlements were primarily trading colonies where were collected the valuable goods from the hinterland and shipped to Europe. Trade absorbed all the energies of the early English gentlemen in India. The staff of their establishments comprised a hierarchy of officials like the senior merchant, merchant, factor and writer and at the bottom of this official and social ladder stood the apprentice. The factory itself consisted of the residences of the President and his subordinates and offices and warehouses and all these were surrounded by fortifications if such were permitted or connived at by the local authorities. In the early stages the factory resembled a combination of a business house and an ecclesiastical college. The members had meals in common and the gates of

the settlement were closed at stated times every day. The President had disciplinary and punitive powers over his subordinates. The commonest offences were gambling, excessive drinking and insubordination. There was much show of pomp and pageantry associated with the tours of the President. He sallied forth to the accompaniment of martial music and a salvo of guns, all of which was done to maintain the prestige of the English in India.

II

But the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English still hovered around the fringes of the maelstrom of politics of continental India. The first manifestation of the total disintegration of Mughal authority came in the form of the rise of the Marathas and the Nizam. The successors of Aurangzeb, from Bahadur Shah I to Bahadur Shah III, were victims either of their own vices or the intrigues of the kingmakers. The throne on which sat great monarchs like Akbar and Aurangzeb now became the sport of eunuchs and perfidious nobles. The story of the Mughal empire after the death of Aurangzeb is a sordid tale of murders, vice and adventure inspired by purely selfish motives. The valour of the Mughals and the wisdom of their kings had departed and their place was taken by political chicanery and vainglorious pomp. Aurangzeb had struggled against the Marathas for a quarter of a century but had failed to destroy them. His hammer-blows had steeled their determination and his fanaticism had awakened their religious passion. The dormant energies of the race were roused into a fierce activity by the sadistic execution of their king Sambhaji by Aurangzeb. Sambhaji's son Shahu was released from Mughal capitivity after Aurangzeb's death and his arrival in Maharashtra led to a brief civil war against Tarabai, the widow of Shahu's brother Raja Ram. The victor Shahu was duly proclaimed the King of the Marathas and his reign of 41 years (1708-1749) marked a turning point in their political fortunes. They were now ready for the imperial expansion and acquired a vigorous leadership in the persons of Balaji Vishwanath and his son and successor Bajirao I. Balaji Vishwanath was a native of

Janjira over which ruled the Abyssinian Siddis. On his arrival in Maharashtra he rendered valuable services to Shahu in his hour of need and was rewarded with the post of the Peshwa or minister. Balaji Vishwanath was an astute politician and an able administrator and his most remarkable feat was his march to Delhi where he secured formal recognition for his master Shahu from the Mughal emperor. Balaji Vishwanath died in 1720 and his young son Bajirao I was appointed to his father's post as Peshwa. This was a departure from the rule laid down by Shivaji that no post should be filled by hereditary succession but the circumstances were unusual and Bajirao's achievements were of such a high order that history vindicated Shahu's action.

In distant Delhi the process of the total collapse of the Mughal empire was fast under way. Bahadur Shah or Shah Alam I ruled from 1708 to 1712. His death was a signal for a war of succession in which Jahandar Shah was victorious. His reign, in the words of the chronicler Khafi Khan, "was a fine time for minstrels and singers and all the tribes of dancers and actors". Jahandar Shah was strangled to death and the end of his successor Farrukhsiyar was equally unpleasant as he was blinded and executed. The real power now vested in the hands of two designing nobles, the Sayyid brothers, who became the kingmakers. Plot and counter-plot followed in quick succession and by 1722 the Sayyid brothers met their nemesis in death and the destruction of their power during the reign of Muhammad Shah. Nizam-ul-mulq, a capable nobleman, was requested to be the Vazir but he preferred the Deccan where he later carved out his own kingdom of Hyderabad. The declining power of the Mughals had created a political vacuum in northern India which the Marathas tried to fill.

At the time of his appointment the Peshwa Bajirao I was barely out of his teens. But what he lacked in years he more than made up in his possession of exceptional military qualities and political vision. During his visit to Delhi with his father he had observed the rottenness of the state of affairs in the Mughal capital. On his assumption of office he advocated a bold forward policy which was accepted after some initial hesitation and debate. During Bajirao's regime of 20 years (1720-

40) the Marathas spread all over Gujarat, Malwa, Bundelkhand and the Deccan. Bajirao created a brilliant hierarchy of distinguished military leaders like the Powars, Shindes, Gaikwads and Holkars ; they owed their position to this intrepid Brahmin commander. Bajirao inflicted severe defeats on the Nizam while his brother Chimnaji Appa won immortal fame with his gallant conquest of the Portuguese stronghold of Bassein near Bombay. By tact and diplomacy the Maratha sea-lord Kanhoji Angrey was won over to the service of the Maratha state and the Maratha flag now proudly fluttered at the head of numerous squadrons of cavalry as well as from the masts of powerful ships on the Arabian sea. Kanhoji successfully battled against the Portuguese and the English and this combination of sea-power and military power, short-lived though it was, clearly made the Marathas irresistible.

Bajirao died at the age of 42 on the 28th of April, 1740. He was a man of exceptional ability, irresistible drive, boundless courage and inspiring vision. Under his leadership the Marathas, once "a cloud no bigger than a man's hand", spread all over India and even after his death the dynamism which he had infused into Maratha policy drove the Marathas forward.

The successor of Bajirao I was his son Balaji (alias Nanasaheb) Bajirao, a youth of 19 years. During his regime of 21 years (1740-61) the Marathas reached the high-water mark of imperial expansion and also suffered a crippling defeat. The policy of imperial expansion was continued and the Nizam was frequently defeated with dramatic results. In northern India the Shindes and Holkars carried forward the limits of Maratha hegemony and became the decisive factors in the politics of the Mughal empire. In the west the Gaikwads had consolidated their position over Gujarat and Saurashtra while in central India the Bhonsles led the drive for imperial expansion. But if the military frontiers of the Maratha power were expanding rapidly the political and administrative frontiers sadly lagged behind. The Maratha expansion in western, central and northern India was primarily a military expansion. The Maratha leadership lacked a proper comprehension of political realities and hence made few efforts at political consolidation of the

territories overrun by their armies. Of administrative arrangements the Maratha rule outside Maharashtra could boast of the merest rudiments. They had understood the military weaknesses of the Mughals but had failed to comprehend the strength of an alternative political ideology to which their successful struggle for independence in Maharashtra was due. Under the circumstances, therefore, what was required to check their advance and roll back the tide of their expanding power was a military defeat which came with the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761.

Just as the victorious armies of the Marathas were scouring the lands of northern India Nadir Shah, the Persian king, had invaded India in 1739. Nadir Shah was assassinated in 1747 and Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Durrani chief, invaded India shortly afterwards. Ahmad Shah found in India a tempting field for spoliation and carried out a series of raids in the Punjab. Conditions in Delhi were chaotic and the Marathas strove to derive the maximum benefit from them without caring to understand the political implications of their military involvements in the politics of northern India. In 1758 when the Peshwa's brother, Raghunathrao, invaded the Punjab and occupied Lahore the Marathas came into direct conflict with Ahmad Shah whose son, Timur Shah, was driven out from his post. Ahmad Shah invaded India to punish the Marathas for their temerity. In this campaign Dattaji Shinde was slain and Holkar was routed. The alarming news brought reinforcements from Maharashtra under the leadership of Sadashiv Bhau, the Peshwa's nephew, who reached Delhi in September 1760. Bhau committed a series of political and tactical blunders and was finally trapped at Panipat. His army was numerous but was far different in battle-worthiness and morale from the victorious armies led by Shivaji and Bajirao I. The Afghan encirclement caught the Marathas in a dragnet against which they struggled in tragic futility. Shortage of food and fodder had sapped the striking force of the Marathas and their morale began to give way. In a desperate attempt to escape certain annihilation they launched a spirited offensive but the Afghan line held. Then began the terrible carnage in which an entire generation of the

flower of Maratha soldiery fell on the battle-field of Panipat.

1761 proved to be a disastrous milestone on the long road to imperial glory which the Maratha nation had traversed. Their prestige as a dominant power was irreparably shaken and though they staged a recovery it was clear that it was but a flicker of a dying flame.

Precisely three years after the Third Battle of Panipat was fought the Battle of Buxar. In 1757 at Plassey Robert Clive of the English East India Company had inflicted a defeat on the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-dawlah. At Buxar the armies of the same East India Company scattered the combined forces of the Nawab of Oudh and the Mughal emperor himself. The significance of this victory was well expressed by Clive in a letter to the Directors of the Company he served. Clive, in this letter dated the 17th of April 1765, stated: "We have at last arrived at that Critical Period, which I have long foreseen; I mean that Period which renders it necessary for us to determine whether we can or shall take the whole to ourselves . . . it is scarcely an Hyperbole to say that the whole Mogul Empire is in our hands. The Inhabitants of the Country . . . have no Attachment to any Obligation; their Forces are neither disciplined, commanded, nor paid, as our are. Can it then be doubted that a large Army of Europeans will effectually preserve us as sovereigns, not only holding in Awe the Attempts of any Country Prince, but by rendering us so truly formidable .... We must indeed become Nabobs ourselves in Fact, if not in Name, perhaps totally so without disgrace." This was no grandiloquent dream, for, the English had travelled a long way across continental India since they first established their factories at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. As far back as the 70's of the 17th century, when the Mughal empire was still strong, they had been advised by Gerald Aungier, their Governor at Bombay, to manage their trade with "sword" in their hands. The factories became forts and the forts had to grow into provinces. Forts and armies were the first two steps in the transformation of the character of the East India Company. These enabled them not only to maintain a system of extra-territoriality but also to intervene in purely local disputes and their armies became instruments of political intervention

in the affairs of India. These armies were trained Indian levies using modern arms, drilled in European military discipline and led by British officers. If the mercantile activities of the East India Company tended to create a commercial revolution its armies ushered a military revolution in the politics of India. This combination of naval strength and military force proved irresistible and through it the Company was transformed into a dominant territorial power in India.

But this transformation could not be completed until the only other serious European rival, the French, had been eliminated from the Indian scene. The French East India Company was founded in 1664 and within the next four years the French had acquired Pondicherry on the eastern seaboard of India and Chandranagar on the Hoogly river in Bengal. Mahe and Karikal were acquired in 1725 and 1739 respectively and by 1741 the real struggle between the English and the French in India was joined.

III

The Anglo-French conflict in India was partly provoked by events in Europe and was partly a result of intervention in the wars of succession in the south. One of the consequences of the disintegration of the Mughal empire was the rise of a number of semi-independent states of which Hyderabad in the Deccan was the most prominent. Its founder, as stated above, was Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-mulk who spurned the offer of a doubtful imperial power in Delhi in preference to the security of his own ability to create a new state in the Deccan. By 1725 Asaf Jah had embarked on his regal career. A man of immense energy and boundless ambition the Nizam held his own against the Marathas and successfully acted as a barrier to their southward expansion. In order to buttress his own power he created a sub-feudatory, the Nawab of Carnatic, with his capital at Arcot. Arcot passed through a series of upheavals and finally the Nizam recognized Anwaruddin who ruled as the Nawab from 1743 to 1749.

At this time the English had entrenched themselves at Madras and the French were at Pondicherry both of which were forti-

fied port-towns. Both the English and the French were naval powers. The indigenous powers, having no navies of their own, were completely at the mercy of these intruding Western powers in any naval engagement. Further, even on land, the European powers had a decisive superiority over the ill-organized, ill-equipped and badly led troops of the Indian states. The situation in the Carnatic (the Coromandel coast and its hinterland) bordered on anarchy. In 1740 the Marathas had swept through the area and wrought havoc and devastation, killing the governor Dost Ali and taking away his son-in-law Chanda Sahib as a prisoner. Safdar Ali, the son of Dost Ali, had ransomed his life for a crore of rupees. He was, however, murdered shortly afterwards. The Nizam had thought that the time had now come to intervene though clearly the situation was beyond his powers to stabilize. He recognized Anwaruddin as the Nawab of Carnatic but this scarcely helped matters.

In 1748 the Nizam Asaf Jah died and there began a struggle for succession between his son Nazir Jung and his grandson Muzaffar Jung. The position of Anwaruddin was also threatened by Chanda Sahib, the son-in-law of an earlier ruler of Arcot, Dost Ali. Here, then, was a promising situation for intervention by the two European powers, the English and the French. Of the two contestants in Hyderabad the French supported Muzaffar Jung while the English were sympathetic to the claims of Nasir Jung. Similarly in Arcot the English sided with Anwaruddin while the French were sympathetic to the claims of Chanda Sahib. It is not necessary for our purpose here to unravel the tangled skein of Indian politics of those days. But as a consequence of the intrusion of purely local factors such as the disputed successions and partly as an echo of the larger international events like the War of Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War, the French and the English came into a violent conflict in India through the three Carnatic wars fought over the period between 1746 and 1763.

The First Carnatic War (1746-48) was merely an echo of the War of the Austrian Succession in Europe. This involved a

prolonged sparring by the two European powers in India and eventually brought to light the unusual abilities of the French Governor-General Francois Dupleix. The French captured Madras in September 1746 against the warnings of Anwaruddin. The Nawab then sent an army against the French whose disciplined forces put to rout the motley host of the Nawab. This was the celebrated battle of Adyar which is an important land-mark in the annals of Indian military history. This battle effectively demonstrated the value of European military technique as used in India and became the first instance wherein a European-led force defeated a wholly Indian army. The Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle of 1748 brought the hostilities to an end and the *status quo ante* was established.

The Second Carnatic War (1748-54) was occasioned by the War of Succession in Hyderabad to which we have already referred. The French installed Muzaffar Jung in Hyderabad and Chanda Sahib in Arcot and the success of this bold stroke added considerably to Dupleix's prestige, gain and power. This was, obviously, entirely distasteful to the English. Clive, who began his career as a writer in the employ of the East India Company, but discovered that he was more at ease with the sword than with the pen, conducted a brilliant defence of Arcot which he had earlier occupied. The French attacked Arcot in force but Clive held out and thus gave an indication of what he was capable of achieving, given the necessary incentive and appropriate occasion. Chanda Sahib was defeated and killed and the English found themselves in virtual possession of the whole of the Carnatic. Dupleix had played for high stakes and had a brilliant commander in De Bussy, but, clearly, the odds were heavily loaded against him and he lost the gamble. He was recalled in 1754 and lived a life of disgrace, a strange prize for his great services to the French cause in India. His successor Godeheu negotiated a peace with the English by the terms of which both sides regained their old positions and agreed not to interfere in the affairs of Indian states. The French had to give up all they had won and though De Bussy continued to remain in the Deccan to wield great influence in Hyderabad, the French had obviously suffered a humiliating defeat.

The Seven Years' War which began in 1756 created conditions of active hostility between England and France in India. Lally, the French Governor, captured Fort St. George. The recall of De Bussy in 1758 from the Deccan was a grave error for, with it, Salabat Jung, the French *protegé*, went over to the English and handed over to them the Northern Sircars. At the Battle of Wandiwash in January 1760 the French were decisively defeated by the English and this practically sealed the fate of the French in India. Karikal, Pondicherry and Jinji surrendered one after another and by the Peace of Paris in 1763 the French possessions in India were restricted to the small settlements at Mahe, Pondicherry, Karikal and Yanam in south India and Chandranagar in Bengal (all of which were handed back to the Republic of India by France during 1950-54).

The French influence, however, lingered on for some time and came into prominence in the careers of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan of Mysore.

Haidar Ali was born in 1722 and began his career as a minor military commander in the employ of the state of Mysore in the Arcot area. At an early stage of his career he attracted attention by his bold strategy, his personal bravery and his thorough understanding of the factors involved in the politics of his time. Gradually he consolidated his position and finally usurped power in the state of Mysore and by 1767 became its virtual ruler.

The rise of Haidar Ali was a phenomenon symptomatic of the character of the politics of the times. Though illiterate he had a remarkable memory for the most complicated details and an administrative skill equal to the best of his time. As a soldier he was bold, daring, skilful and ambitious and many of his campaigns, whether of offence or defence, were characterized by outbursts of a thorough-going ruthlessness. Quick in movement, he flit from district to district with lightning rapidity. In his dealings with other powers he tended to be straight-forward and honest but once his ire was roused he would go to any length to avenge his honour or retrieve his lost position.

Haidar Ali had to fight against three formidable foes almost simultaneously. The Marathas regarded his rise to power with feelings bordering on active anxiety as he effectively checked their southward expansion. Time and again they had to undertake long and involved campaigns to recover what they considered their dues from Haidar Ali. The Nizam was more subtle in his dealings with this Mysore potentate and so were the English. But all three found it difficult, for reasons of obvious self-interest, to take kindly to the growing power of Haidar Ali of Mysore.

The combined period of Haidar Ali and his son and successor Tipu Sultan covered some 38 years and its highlights were the four Mysore wars. The Marathas had invaded Haidar's territories in 1765, forced him to surrender the two districts of Gooty and Savnur, and imposed on him the payment of an indemnity of 32 lakhs of rupees. In November 1766 the English agreed to help the Nizam against Haidar Ali in return for the cession of the Northern Sircars by the Nizam. Thus was the triple alliance of the Marathas, the Nizam and the English formed and Haidar Ali knew that he could not effectively oppose this formidable combination. He, however, bought off the Marathas and the Nizam soon deserted the English and went over to Haidar. But this new combination of assorted opponents was defeated by an English army in September 1767 whereupon the Nizam once again crossed the line and joined the English. This roused Haidar's anger and he continued to fight with great determination and vigour. He defeated an English army sent from Bombay and recovered Mangalore, sweeping everything before him within five miles of Madras in March 1769. At this point the English signed a peace treaty with him (on the 4th of April 1769) which provided for an exchange of prisoners and reciprocal return of conquered territories. By it the English also promised help to Haidar Ali in the event of his being attacked by a third power. But the English failed to live up to this part of the bargain of help when the Marathas attacked Mysore in 1771 which provoked Haidar Ali into bitter protests. He readily joined a confederacy formed by the Nizam and the Marathas against the English and when the latter attacked the French in Mahe

Haidar declared war against them. In July 1780 he swept through the Carnatic like a tornado carrying death and destruction before him and by October 1780 had seized Arcot. But the English rallied in time, broke up the alliance by detaching the Marathas and the Nizam and finally defeated Haidar Ali in 1781 at Porto Novo. Haidar, however, was far from crushed but death intervened and this redoubtable warrior passed away on the 7th of December, 1782. His son and successor Tipu Sultan continued the war and won a brilliant victory in 1783. When the news of peace between England and France reached India the French experts in Tipu's armies were compelled to withdraw and finally peace was re-established with the Treaty of Mangalore signed in March 1784. This treaty brought about a reciprocal exchange of prisoners and restoration of territories.

The immediate cause of the Third Anglo-Mysore War was Tipu's attack on Travancore which was regarded as an ally by the British. This was in 1789. Once again a triple alliance of the English, the Nizam and the Marathas was formed in 1790 and war was fought for over two years involving three major campaigns. By March 1792 Tipu was defeated and by the terms of surrender was deprived of half of his territories. But Tipu was not the one to take defeat easily. He smarted under the humiliation of surrender and actively engaged in seeking external aid with the intention of driving the British out of India. He maintained close connections with the French. He became a member of the Jacobin Club and planted a tree of liberty at his capital, Seringapatam. He sent envoys to Arabia, Afghanistan and Constantinople and these activities of his were viewed with great concern by the English who regarded him as their most determined enemy. Preparations for war were soon under way and as the first step the Nizam was drawn into a subsidiary alliance by that great pro-consul Wellesley in 1798. A sharp but decisive campaign was fought. Tipu was defeated on the 5th of March 1799 and again on the 27th, and died fighting in defence of his freedom. The war ended and with it disappeared the power of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. Mysore was partitioned with the Nizam being given the districts of Gooty, Gurramkonda and part of Chitaldrug. The Marathas

were also offered some territories but they refused to share the booty. The English annexed Canara, Wynad, Seringapatam and Darapuram and over the rest of the territory a young prince from the old Hindu dynasty was set up as ruler, firmly bound by a subsidiary alliance.

Tipu Sultan has been described by some English authors as a blood-thirsty tyrant, a despot and bigot. But to accept this account of his character and personality would be to do him less than justice. An intrepid fighter, Tipu showed exceptional qualities of bravery, leadership and determination. He was, in his own right, also a man of culture as his library in his capital showed. Of all the Indian rulers Tipu alone had shown the clearest evidence of an understanding of the singular phenomenon of the rise of the English power in India and his death was a testament of his hatred of alien domination.

With the elimination of the power of Mysore and the imposition of subsidiary alliances on the Nizam and in Travancore and the annexation of large areas, South India, by 1800, was brought under English paramountcy. The French, as a factor in Indian politics, were totally eliminated and the English, thus, were left without a European rival in India.

IV

The English success in South India was paralleled by similar successes in Bengal and western India in the period between 1757 and 1818. Like Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-mulk of Hyderabad the Nawab Alivardi Khan of Bengal rose to eminence on the decline of the Mughal empire. Alivardi Khan died in 1756 and was succeeded by his grand-nephew Siraj-ud-daulah. The English had, at this time, fortified their settlement at Calcutta and Siraj-ud-daulah ordered them to demolish the fortifications. The English refused to comply with the order. In consequence, the Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah seized Cossimbazar and marched on the Hooghly on the 15th of June 1756. Siraj-ud-daulah had an "uneasy feeling in his mind that unless he took precautions the Europeans would turn Bengal upside down as they had done the Karnatak and the Deccan". On the 17th of June the Nawab's troops were inside the town-

limits and after the surrender by the English the incident infamous as the Black Hole of Calcutta is supposed to have taken place. The incident involved, if at all it did take place, the death of defenceless English subjects and is often cited as an instance of Indian barbarity. But the veracity of this account is so highly questionable that it is difficult to accept it as a sober historical fact.

The news of the defeat at Calcutta was received at Madras and a force was promptly sent under the command of Robert Clive. Clive, as remarked earlier, started his career as a writer but at Adyar had shown his great military qualities. Calcutta was recovered on the 2nd of January 1757, and all the old privileges were restored to the company.

At this time a remarkable transformation was taking place in the economic life of large areas of the country. The coming of the Western companies had profoundly modified the volume and character of Indian trade and had thrown up a new class in Indian society, a class that profited from the increased trade with the Western world. The bankers of Surat, Madras and Calcutta were a force to reckon with both for the indigenous rulers and the European corporations. As K. M. Panikkar, in his *Asia and the Western Dominance*, observes: "The Anangaranga Pillais (the *Dubash* of Dupleix) and the Pachiappa Mudaliars of Madras were men of great power and influence. During the eighteenth century, as a result of the growth of the Bengal trade, the commercial community of north India had flocked to Murshidabad and Calcutta. The Marwari millionaires of Bengal had become the equivalent of the comprador classes of Shanghai of a later period. While the Nawabs and generals were able to squeeze them occasionally, there was no doubt that effective power in the form of control of the economic life of the province had passed from the decrepit Mughal nobles to the *bania* capitalists who fawned on them in their *durbars* but held their purse strings tightly. The emergence of this powerful class, whose economic interests were bound up with those of the foreign merchants and who had an inherited hatred of the Muslim rule, was a factor of fundamental importance to the history of India and Asia" (p. 99). The proliferation of the European commercial settle-

ments and the direction which they gave to Indian trade produced a profound influence on the economy of India which paralleled the change in the political fortunes of the indigenous feudal powers.

Siraj-ud-daulah was a vain and vacillating character who showed the utmost incompetence in dealing with his powerful foes. He had so alienated the sympathies of his likely supporters that he could expect little help from them. The English were getting interested in Mir Jafar, an important official of the Nawab, as a suitable and pliant alternative to the intractable Siraj-ud-daulah. The powerful financiers were also hostile to him for the various acts of offence he had committed against them. The English gave shelter to all the fugitives from the Nawab's wrath or justice and showed scant courtesy to him when he demanded that the alleged culprits be surrendered. Finally the conspiracy to depose Siraj-ud-daulah was completed. A skirmish, later magnified into the great battle of Plassey, took place on the 23rd of June 1757. Siraj-ud-daulah was taken captive and handed over to the tender mercies of his rival Mir Jafar. As a battle, observes Panikkar, "Plassey was ridiculous. Mir Jafar, who vacillated during the engagement, came timidly round with congratulations and he was told he was now Nawab." Plassey thus, was "a transaction, not a battle, a transaction by which the compradors of Bengal, led by Jagat Seth, sold the Nawab to the East India Company. The Nawab's generals, already in league with the Hindu merchant princes and their British allies, did not fight and the treacherous general, Mir Jafar, received as the price of his betrayal, the Nawabi of Bengal."

The Battle of Plassey is regarded as an important land-mark in the history of India not because of any display of exceptional qualities of military leadership on either side but because of its economic and political results. As a consequence of this so-called battle the Company became a landlord of 880 sq. miles of territory south of Calcutta with an estimated revenue of £ 150,000. The Company also now became a kingmaker in Bengal and this privilege it exercised with such dexterity that ere long it was established as the dominant power in the affairs of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Clive benefited personally from

the turn of events in Bengal for he received £ 234,000 while others received various sums and the total amounted to three million pounds sterling. The process of "shaking the pagoda-tree" had begun and it was to produce very interesting results.

Mir Jafar had destroyed Siraj-ud-daulah with English help but he was soon to discover that the proferred hand of English friendship, in his circumstances, meant a virtual embrace of death. He had to pay enormous sums to satisfy the extortionate demands of the corrupt officials of the English East India Company. Clive returned to England in February 1760 as "perhaps the King's wealthiest subject"; using a rotten borough he obtained a seat in Parliament and "engaged in the tremendous corruption of men's conscience that passed for politics in the eighteenth century". He was largely responsible for the "monstrous financial immorality of English conduct in India for many a year." Mir Jafar was soon squeezed dry and was replaced by Mir Kasim, the erstwhile Nawab's relation by marriage. All these changes meant considerable personal financial gain to the servants of the East India Company for each incumbent had to pay a heavy price for the coveted post. Mir Kasim began well but soon ran into trouble. He had discovered that the privilege of duty-free trade given to the Company was being abused by its servants for personal gain and this meant an enormous loss of revenue to him. When Mir Kasim tried to stop this abuse he was involved in a war with the Company and was replaced by the old ex-Nawab, Mir Jafar, on payment of a suitable price.

The deposed Mir Kasim went to Oudh where he formed a confederacy with the Nawab of Oudh and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II with the object of wresting Bengal from the English. The English, however, defeated the confederate army at Buxar on the 22nd of October 1764, whereupon the Mughal emperor promptly joined the English and signed a peace treaty with them. The hapless Mir Kasim lead a vagrant life and died in obscurity near Delhi in 1777. More than Plassey, the Battle of Buxar decided the fate of indigenous powers in the area. As a direct consequence of this battle the Company acquired the status of the revenue-collector for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the annual income of which amounted

to over £4,000,000 and for a decade "the whole power of the organized state was directed to a single purpose—plunder. It was a robber state that had come into existence, and Richard Becher, a servant of the Company, wrote to his masters in London on May 24, 1769 as follows: "It must give pain to an Englishman to have reason to think that since the accession of the company to the *diwani* the condition of the people of this country has been worse than it was before.... This fine country, which flourished under the most despotic and arbitrary government, is verging towards ruin....'"

This was the new state that had come into existence in India, a state based on "a merciless exploitation of the people" and it "had an unchallengeable mastery of the sea, which enabled it to concentrate its strength anywhere on the coast". In the making of this state had gone the genius of Clive and the conscience of Warren Hastings, the ambition of Cornwallis and the war-like imperiousness of Wellesley. It was the state which was supposedly brought into being in a fit of absent-mindedness but was really based on extensive and predatory warfare all over continental India. Clive returned to India in time to reap the benefits of the political consequences of the Battle of Buxar. His second tenure of office in the country was short for he returned to England in 1772. He is the swash-buckling hero of the folklore of English imperialism in India, the Clive of the "Bengal Lancers." Of his honesty and moral integrity little need be said. He had come to India to serve the best interests of his country and if these coincided with his personal gain none need have any quarrels with him. That he did not rise above the duplicity, venality and corruption which sprawled all around him, both among his own countrymen and the Indians who became alternately his friends and enemies, may be explained as due to an all-too-common human weakness. That he was a brilliant military leader as well as a shrewd diplomat cannot be denied. His services to his nation were great and in this lies his claim to renown.

The successor of Clive in the English imperial tradition was Warren Hastings. Hastings, like Clive, began his career as a writer and ended it as a Governor-General. Between 1772-85, when he held that office, he tried to do many things. He first

turned his attention to administrative reforms but was soon inevitably embroiled in the politics of his time. His impeachment at the end of his career on his return to England brought out, in rather a lurid way, some of the objectionable aspects of his activities. With these there is no need to deal here. Of his judicial and revenue reforms an account will be presented in another part of this work. His career and those of his successors, Cornwallis and Wellesley, are significant as stages in the imperial expansion of the English power in India, especially with reference to the annexation of northern and central areas of India, and, to these we will now turn.

V

In an earlier section of this chapter we traced the progress of the Maratha power from the time of the first Peshwa to the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761. The shock of this disaster was too much for Peshwa Balaji Bajirao to bear and he died in June of the same year. At the time of his death his eldest son Madhavrao was barely 16 years old and his brother Raghunathrao aspired to be the Peshwa himself. Though personally brave, Raghunathrao, or Raghoba as he was popularly known, was a vain person and was completely under the influence of his ambitious wife Anandibai. The seeds of fraticidal war were thus sown at the very outset of Madhavrao's career and on several occasions Raghoba threw the fruits of victory away by signing ill-considered treaties with the Nizam and Haidar Ali. Madhavrao, however, rose equal to his task and during his brief career of some ten years the Marathas staged a remarkable recovery. The Nizam was fought back and Haidar Ali held at bay. In the north Shinde and Holkar re-established the Maratha influence at the Mughal court. Madhavrao's death at the age of 28, in 1772, was a disaster greater than Panipat itself and within half a century of his death the Marathas were completely crushed as claimants to the paramountcy of India.

The history of the regimes of the Peshwas from Narayanrao, Madhavrao's brother, to Bajirao II, Raghoba's son, is a chronicle

to over £ 4,000,000 and for a decade "the whole power of the organized state was directed to a single purpose—plunder. It was a robber state that had come into existence, and Richard Becher, a servant of the Company, wrote to his masters in London on May 24, 1769 as follows: "It must give pain to an Englishman to have reason to think that since the accession of the company to the *diwani* the condition of the people of this country has been worse than it was before.... This fine country, which flourished under the most despotic and arbitrary government, is verging towards ruin....'"

This was the new state that had come into existence in India, a state based on "a merciless exploitation of the people" and it "had an unchallengeable mastery of the sea, which enabled it to concentrate its strength anywhere on the coast". In the making of this state had gone the genius of Clive and the conscience of Warren Hastings, the ambition of Cornwallis and the war-like imperiousness of Wellesley. It was the state which was supposedly brought into being in a fit of absent-mindedness but was really based on extensive and predatory warfare all over continental India. Clive returned to India in time to reap the benefits of the political consequences of the Battle of Buxar. His second tenure of office in the country was short for he returned to England in 1772. He is the swash-buckling hero of the folklore of English imperialism in India, the Clive of the "Bengal Lancers." Of his honesty and moral integrity little need be said. He had come to India to serve the best interests of his country and if these coincided with his personal gain none need have any quarrels with him. That he did not rise above the duplicity, venality and corruption which sprawled all around him, both among his own countrymen and the Indians who became alternately his friends and enemies, may be explained as due to an all-too-common human weakness. That he was a brilliant military leader as well as a shrewd diplomat cannot be denied. His services to his nation were great and in this lies his claim to renown.

The successor of Clive in the English imperial tradition was Warren Hastings. Hastings, like Clive, began his career as a writer and ended it as a Governor-General. Between 1772-85, when he held that office, he tried to do many things. He first

turned his attention to administrative reforms but was soon inevitably embroiled in the politics of his time. His impeachment at the end of his career on his return to England brought out, in rather a lurid way, some of the objectionable aspects of his activities. With these there is no need to deal here. Of his judicial and revenue reforms an account will be presented in another part of this work. His career and those of his successors, Cornwallis and Wellesley, are significant as stages in the imperial expansion of the English power in India, especially with reference to the annexation of northern and central areas of India, and, to these we will now turn.

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of diminishing wisdom and vanishing glory. The Maratha Confederacy was fast becoming a house divided against itself. Intrigue, inordinate passion for personal power rather than a concern for the collective good, and mutual suspicion, characterised the relations of the Maratha nobles among themselves. Only three great figures, Mahadji Shinde of Gwalior, Nana Fadnis, the Peshwa's finance minister, and Ahalyabai Holkar of Indore, dispelled the darkness that was spreading all around. Both Mahadji Shinde and Nana Fadnis had seen Panipat and survived it. In a sense the two were complementary characters. While Mahadji Shinde was the soldier, Nana Fadnis was the statesman. Mahadji employed French officers and had his armies trained and equipped on the European model of the day. He practically became the protector of the Mughal emperor and by his activities the prestige of the Marathas was held aloft in northern India. Nana parried the attempts made by the English to embroil the Marathas in the wars of intervention waged by the English in India and successfully kept the Marathas out of the dragnet of the subsidiary alliances designed by Wellesley. In 1794 Mahadji Shinde died and six years later died Nana Fadnis. The death of these two leaders left the Maratha state weak in military strength as well as wisdom. For twenty-five years the English were trying hard to rope in the Marathas in their system of subsidiary alliances but Nana Fadnis resolutely refused to be involved. In 1774 the English secured a much-sought opportunity for direct intervention in Maratha politics when Raghoba was ousted from the Peshwaship by the council of regency headed by Nana Fadnis after the birth of Madhavrao II, the posthumous son of Narayanrao. Raghoba turned to the English for help. The English occupied Salsette and the treaty was signed with that "cypher" Raghoba on the 7th of March 1775, by which the English agreed to assist him with a force of 2,500 troops in return for which Salsette and Bassein were to be permanently ceded to them. Further, under the terms of this Treaty of Surat, Raghoba was to give a share of the revenues of the Surat and Broach districts and defray the expenses of the military campaign designed to secure for him the Peshwaship. The consequence of this was the Battle of Aras in which

the Marathas suffered a serious reverse. But the Council at Calcutta disapproved of the war-like action taken by the Bombay council without prior permission and finally, on the 1st of March 1776, the Treaty of Purandar was signed. This treaty superseded the earlier treaty of Surat and peace was restored. But the British hung on to Salsette and claimed a large amount of money from the Marathas for paying the cost of a war which, on their own admission, was illegal. Raghunathrao was pensioned off and later found asylum with the English at Surat.

In 1776, however, the directors of the East India Company in England sent out a dispatch approving the Treaty of Surat whereupon the Bombay authorities unilaterally annulled the Treaty of Purandar and a new alliance with Raghoba was formed. Weakness on the Maratha side and an expedient disregard for inconvenient treaties on the English side soon brought the two powers into conflict. But the English suffered a defeat at Wadgaon in 1779 and subsequently the Convention of Wadgaon was signed. This provided for restitution of illegally occupied territory by the English to the Marathas and the surrender of Raghoba to the Peshwa. Warren Hastings, the Governor-General, however, did not approve of this convention and consequently a force led by Goddard marched from Bengal to Surat capturing Ahmedabad on the way. The Gaikwad of Baroda was skilfully detached from the Maratha Confederacy through a subsidiary alliance. The final outcome was the Treaty of Salbai signed in 1782 whereby Raghoba was finally dropped as an English puppet and all the territory seized from the Marathas, with the exception of Salsette, was restored to them. The peace ushered by this treaty lasted for twenty years.

In 1796 Bajirao II, the son of Raghoba, became the Peshwa. Both Shinde and Holkar attempted to secure him as their *protegé* and to escape this Bajirao went over to the English. The Treaty of Bassein was signed with him in 1802 and with English help the Peshwa returned to his capital Poona. This treaty marked the beginning of the end of Maratha independence. The Maratha chiefs, Shinde and Holkar, resented this English interference in and domination over Maratha affairs

and battles were fought at Assaye, Adgaon and Laswadi in which Shinde and Holkar were defeated and forced to join the subsidiary system. The finale came with the third Maratha War, fought in 1817-1818, when the restive Peshwa tried to regain his independence but was routed at Khadki and his territories were annexed. A year later Bajirao II surrendered to the English and was given a small pension. The Maratha empire had come to an end.

The downfall of the Marathas eliminated the last serious challenge to English supremacy in India. During the last 25 years the Maratha state was a house divided against itself. The Marathas had watched with nonchalance the declining fortunes of the Mughal emperors and their Nawabs. Against Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan they had joined in the punitive alliances forged by the English. They had constantly fought the Nizam and in the process had failed to add anything substantial to their strength or fortunes. Their roving armies had traversed the length and breadth of India. The Marathas had spread all over the country like a forest fire and like a forest fire they disappeared. They had failed to give their regional patriotism a national content. In their last days they had mistaken petty intrigues for grand diplomacy and a foraging sally for a mighty campaign. Their vision had been atrophied, their methods of fighting and weapons of war were antiquated and their unity of purpose in the very struggle for political survival was overlaid with factional jealousies and rivalries. They scanned the seas from the spurs of their rugged mountains but failed to see the great revolution going on in the sea-lanes. In heroism, idealism and perseverance they had established a place of pride for themselves in the annals of Indian history but the scales of destiny were tipped heavily against them.

The end of Maratha empire brought areas in western and central India under English hegemony. From Cape Comorin to Saurashtra and from Bombay to Calcutta the English had all the land in their fief. Only Sind, the Punjab and the peripheral areas in the north-west and north-east remained outside direct English control. To these they soon turned their attention.

VI

Like the Marathas the Sikhs also rose in revolt against the Mughal empire. The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak (1469-1538), began his religious career as a reformer. Being dissatisfied with the prevailing religious notions and ritualistic practices among both the Hindus and the Muslims, Guru Nanak exhorted his followers to follow an uncompromising monotheism and a simple creed of moral living as the means of salvation. His noble life and spiritual earnestness soon won him a numerous following from among the peasant communities of northern India. Through the early decades of their history the Sikhs lived as a peaceful peasant community and their spiritual leaders won the respect of the Mughal emperors. The hostility between the Sikhs and the Mughals, however, began when Jahangir (1605-1627) executed Guru Arjan Singh for support to the rebellion of Khusrau. Guru Arjan's son Har Govind also came into conflict with Shah Jahan (1628-1658). Finally with the execution of Guru Teg Bahadur by Aurangzeb (1658-1707) there developed an implacable enmity between the Sikhs and the Mughals. Repeated persecution through three generations of Mughal rule led to the transformation of the Sikh community into a military clan. During the time of Guru Govind (1675-1708) the *Khalsa*, the army of the Sikhs, came to be organized and with Guru Banda, the successor of Guru Govind, the Sikhs began their warlike activities. They captured Sir Hind and extended their conquest to the territory between the Sutlej and the Jamuna. Lohgad, the "Iron" Fort, was also taken and it was here that the Sikh Guru assumed a royal state. Banda was captured by the Mughals and executed in 1716. The invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali gave the Sikhs their opportunity for further conquests in the disturbed conditions of the time and Lahore was captured in 1764. By this time the Sikhs had extended their hold on all the territory stretching from Saharangpur in the east to Attock in the west and from Multan in the south to Kangra in the north. They were now organized into 12 units forming a "theocratic confederate feudalism."

With the rise of Ranjit Singh the Sikhs became a dominant

power in northern India. Ranjit Singh (born November 2, 1780) was the son of one of the Sikh confederate leaders. He began his career in 1792. In 1798 he was appointed the governor of Lahore by the Afghan ruler Zaman Shah. Ranjit Singh began to unite the different Sikh groups under his leadership and by 1807 extended his influence over the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs in which he encountered opposition from the British. Lord Minto, the then Governor-General, resisted Ranjit Singh's efforts with great tact and sent Metcalfe on a mission to Lahore. A show of military firmness soon convinced Ranjit Singh of the wisdom of coming to terms with the British and by the Treaty of Amritsar of 1809 he agreed to confine himself to the right side of the Sutlej. The Cis-Sutlej Sikhs thus came under the protection of the British. Being checked in the east Ranjit Singh began his march in the north, north-west and west. During 1809-11 he conquered Kangra ; in 1813 he defeated the Afghans and captured Attock ; five years later, in 1818, he conquered Multan in Sind and in the succeeding year occupied Kashmir. By 1824 a large part of the Indus valley was under his control. In 1831 the British signed a treaty of alliance with him with the obvious intention of using the Sikh state as a buffer between the British conquests in India and the expansive Russians in Central Asia. In 1834 Ranjit Singh captured Peshawar and with it reached the ultimate expansion of his power in northern and north-western India. He died on the 27th of June 1839.

Ranjit Singh was a remarkable personality. Beginning his career in a small way he grew into one of the most powerful rulers of the India of his days by sheer dint of personal character, effort and skill as much in war as in diplomacy. Victor Jacquemont, the French traveller of the time, described him as a "Bonaparte in miniature". Though not handsome in appearance he had a personality which impressed everyone who came into contact with him. He was the "beau ideal of a soldier, strong, spare, active, courageous, and enduring. An excellent horseman, he would remain the whole day in saddle without showing any sign of fatigue." He was endowed "with some of the most conspicuous and undoubted signs and characteristics of greatness". His formidable army, the ultimate sanction of

his power, grew under his watchful eye and loving care. "He was a born ruler, with natural genius of command. Men obeyed him by instinct and because they had no power to disobey." He employed Europeans to train his army and artillery and his military genius was made manifest in "the skill with which he formed a powerful, disciplined, and well equipped army out of the raw Sikh levies". In this he enlisted the help of foreign experts like the Italian General Ventura and General Allard, one of Napoleon's officers, the Irishman Colonel Gardman and the Neapolitan General Avitabile. And his strong and capable hand was to be seen as much in military organization as in the internal administration of his dominions. Under his leadership the Sikhs finally emerged from being a persecuted religious community into a strong, powerful and united military state.

With his death, however, the superstructure of the Sikh state, so laboriously created by him, began to show signs of an impending collapse. There then began a struggle for power and a succession of weak rulers followed. In 1834 the minor Dalip Singh, under the regency of Rani Jindan, was acknowledged as the rigthful ruler. In this confusion the powerful army of Ranjit Singh became a menacing factor in the internal politics of the Sikh State. The Regent found it almost impossible to control the army and considered allowing it to engage in action against the British as a way out of an uncomfortable situation. The British also gave provocation by sending army units to the Sutlej and under the circumstances, therefore, war became inevitable. On the 11th of December 1845 the Sikh army crossed the Sutlej and two days later the British declared war. There were sharp encounters and in a number of engagements the Sikhs showed great gallantry, courage and tenacity but were let down by their leadership. By March 1846 the Sikhs were decisively defeated and war ended with a treaty concluded on the 9th of March 1846. Under the terms of this treaty the Sikhs had to cede all territories left of the Sutlej and the Jullandhar Doab between the Sutlej and the Beas. A heavy war indemnity was exacted and the Sikhs were required to reduce their army. The Sikhs were also asked not to employ non-English foreigners without the prior consent of the British

government. Finally a resident was appointed at the Lahore court. Kashmir was sold to Maharaja Gulab Singh, a feudatory of the Sikh state, for one million pounds sterling by a separate treaty.

The First Sikh War had weakened the Sikhs but had increased their resentment and restlessness. The Second Sikh War began with what is called the Diwan Mulraj incident. Diwan Mulraj was the governor of Multan who was pressed by the Lahore Durbar to make good a large amount of money. He, however, resigned in March 1848. Sardar Khan Singh was appointed in his place and accompanied by two British officers Khan Singh attempted to occupy Multan. The British officers were murdered on the 20th of April 1848 and it was suspected that Mulraj had a hand in all this. Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, adopted, for the time being, a "wait and see" policy but the Multan revolt soon developed into a resistence movement of the Sikhs. Dalhousie then declared : "The Sikh nation has called for war, and on my word, sirs, they shall have it with a vengeance." On the 16th of November 1848 the British army crossed the Ravi and a fierce engagement was fought at Chillianwala on the 13th of January 1849. The Sikhs fought with their usual vigour and bravery and there were heavy casualties on both sides. Multan was stormed on the 22nd of January 1849 ; Mulraj was captured and sent overseas for transportation for life. He died shortly afterwards. On the 21st of February 1849 a crushing defeat was inflicted on the Sikhs at Gujarat on the Chenab and on March 12 the Sikhs surrendered. At the end of the month Dalhousie declared the Punjab annexed to the British dominions in India. Dalip Singh, the young king, was given a small pension. He went to England with his mother and lived in Norfolk for some time.

The annexation of the Punjab greatly increased the area under British suzerainty in northern and north-western India giving it a strong natural frontier. After the annexation a band of capable administrators brought order in the Punjab and the introduction of various beneficial reforms turned Sikh hostility into solid friendship which proved so useful to the British during the Indian revolt of 1857.

VII

The period of a hunderd years between 1750 and 1850 saw the steady growth of the British dominion and the consolidation of British paramountcy in the country. With the battle of Plassey in 1757 and more especially after the Battle of Buxar in 1764, the East India Company emerged as one of the territorial powers in India. The Carnatic wars, the Mysore wars, the Maratha wars, the Sikh wars and many other major and minor military victories made the Company the sovereign power in India. The British conquests were finally consolidated and rounded off with the annexation of Sind, the defeat of the Gurkhas in the Nepal wars and the annexation of large parts of Burma as a consequence of the two Burmese wars. The Nepal war (1814-1816) came as a consequence of the Gurkha attacks in Butwal in 1814. The Gurkhas had organized a large part of the Himalayan territory under their dynastic rule and taking advantage of the political confusion in the plains began to expand across the *tarai* and into Kangra and Sikkim. With their attack on Butwal they invited reprisals from the British and Lord Hastings, the Governor-General, declared war against them. Being ignorant of the territorial and other difficulties, the British suffered initial reverses but under the command of General Ochterlony they finally defeated the Gurkhas, who like the Sikhs later on, showed their greatness in attack as well as defence. Finally the Treaty of Sagauli was ratified on the 28th of February 1816, by which the Gurkhas gave up their claim to the lowlands on their southern frontier, ceded Garhwal and Kumaon to the British, withdrew from Sikkim and accepted a British resident at their capital, Kathmandu. The British acquired valuable territory which included the important hill-stations of Simla, Nainital and Mussooree and eventually secured the friendship of the Gurkhas. The Gurkhas retained their independence and became a valuable source of recruitment to the British Indian armies in the succeeding decades.

The Burmese wars were occasioned by the Burmese advance on the eastern frontier of India, especially in Assam and Manipur. There were several incidents and finally Lord Amherst

declared war on the Burmese on the 24th of February 1824. Rangoon was captured on the 11th of May. In April 1825 the Burmese lost their valiant general Bandula and the war terminated with the Treaty of Yandaboo on the 24th of February 1826. By this treaty the Burmese agreed to pay a large war indemnity and ceded Arakan and Tenasserim to the British. They also undertook not to interfere in the affairs of Manipur and Assam and accepted a British resident at Ava. A commercial treaty, which, however, proved unsatisfactory very soon, was also signed.

With the accession of King Tharawaddy there arose new difficulties. In keeping with the Burmese custom the new king refused to accept the Treaty of Yandaboo signed by his predecessor. There were also complaints by the British merchants of oppression by the Burmese officials and finally matters reached a breaking point. Hostilities commenced on the 1st of April 1852. The British forces marched on Rangoon and soon town after town surrendered. Finally, on the 20th of December 1852, Lower Burma was annexed by a proclamation. The conquest of Burma was completed later in 1886 with the Third Burmese War.

The Afghan War and the annexation of Sind were also events which were closely associated with the British desire for increased dominion and secure frontiers. Zaman Shah, an able and ambitious ruler, secured control in Afghanistan in May 1793. He desired to emulate the examples of Nadir Shah and Ahmadshah Abdali by extending his sway into India and in furtherance of his aims occupied Lahore in 1798. We have seen how Tipu Sultan tried to invite his aid in the war against the British in south India and consequently the British kept a watchful eye on him. But troubles at home so neutralized Zaman Shah as a threat that he finally disappeared from the scene. His disappearance was followed by a period of disorder and it was not until the accession of Dost Muhammad that British interest in Afghanistan revived. Dost Muhammad, troubled with numerous difficulties, sought British friendship though his overtures were treated with distinct coldness by Lord Auckland (1836-42). In consequence the Afghan ruler turned to Persia and Russia, which alarmed the British. A mission

to Kabul was dispatched in November 1836 but by the 26th of April 1838 it was clear that the mission had failed. Lord Auckland thereupon sought active intervention in Afghan affairs by trying to depose Dost Muhammad and place his rival, Shah Shuja, on the throne. Troops were soon assembled and a part of the forces, in violation of the treaty with the Amirs of Sind, was sent to Quandahar. The British army stormed Ghazni on the 23rd of July 1839, and Kabul was captured on the 3rd of August. Shah Shuja was installed on the throne as a British puppet and the triumph was seemingly complete when Dost Muhammad surrendered in 1840 and was sent to Calcutta as a prisoner. But the apparent triumph was soon turned into a real and enormous tragedy. There were insurrections in different parts of the country in 1841 and in early 1842 the British retreat became a complete rout. The army was destroyed and the unjust war, at least in this case, brought terrible punishment with it. Shah Shuja was murdered and eventually Dost Muhammad regained his throne which he occupied until his death in 1863.

The Afghan War threw into sharp focus the importance of Sind to British imperial interests. Sind was ruled by the Amirs of the Talpur tribe with their centres at Hyderabad, Khairpur and Mirpur. The English had maintained sporadic commercial interests in the area in the latter half of the 18th century. The rise of Ranjit Singh threatened the existence of the Amirs, and the British, taking advantage of their natural apprehension, concluded a treaty of friendship and commerce with them in 1832. An important clause of this treaty was the prohibition of the transport of military forces and goods through Sind which, as we have seen, was violated by the British in the course of the Afghan War. By the treaty of 1838 the British foisted a resident on the Amirs. Later the British made exactions from them which were paid under duress and by 1839 Sind was formally placed under British protection. It was clear that the British wanted to annex Sind and a convenient pretext of hostile intentions on the part of the Amirs against the British was discovered. With characteristic candour Sir Charles Napier wrote in his diary : " We have no right to seize Sind, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful,

humane piece of rascality it will be." The Baluchis rose in revolt against this so-called "humane piece of rascality" of Napier and war was declared in 1843. After a brief engagement Sind was finally annexed in August 1843.

VIII

The creation of the British empire in India in this period (1757-1857) was largely the work of nine outstanding personalities. They were Clive (1757-1765), Warren Hastings (1772-1785), Lord Cornwallis (1786-1793), Lord Wellesley (1798-1805), Lord Hastings (1813-1823), Lord Amherst (1823-1828), Lord Ellenborough (1842-1844), Lord Hardinge (1844-1848) and Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856). Clive won the Battle of Plassey and reaped the harvest after the Battle of Buxar in 1765. The First Maratha War (1778-1782) and the Second Mysore War (1780-1784) were fought during the time of Warren Hastings. Lord Cornwallis came to India committed to the policy of non-intervention but it was during his time that the Third Mysore War was fought. Born on December 31, 1738 Cornwallis was educated at Eton and joined the army at the age of 18. He is remembered for his part in the American War of Independence and his surrender at Yorktown brought a virtual end to the American War. His career is best remembered for the Permanent Revenue Settlement of 1793 in Bengal—a measure that had far-reaching economic consequences. Like Cornwallis Wellesley came of a distinguished family with all the background of Harrow and Eton. He was the great pro-consul who elaborated the system of subsidiary alliances, extinguished the freedom of Mysore after the Fourth Mysore War and with whom also began the beginning of the end of Maratha independence with the Second Maratha War. The system of subsidiary alliances particularly facilitated the expansion of the British paramountcy in India. Four distinct stages may easily be distinguished in the evolution of this system. In the first stage the Company's armies were hired out to Indian rulers on payment of money as in the Rohilla War during the time of Warren Hastings. In the second phase the Company's troops took the field on their own account

though assisted by the army of a friendly Indian ruler. In the third phase the Company's troops were attached to an Indian prince and paid for in cash by him. In such campaigns no Indian native ruler's forces took part. In the last phase the Company's forces were stationed in the territory of the native ruler ostensibly to protect him and for this the Company received territory to defray the expenses of its troops. The conditions of this kind of alliance as enforced by Wellesley and others after him were : cession of territory ; the foreign relations of the ruler were handled by the Company which also became the arbitrator in disputes involving the subsidiary ally and other Indian powers ; the Indian prince agreed not to employ any non-British Europeans without the consent of the Company ; and the Company held itself responsible for the protection of the subsidiary ally against external aggression or internal commotions. Such a system helped the Company throw forward its military frontiers in advance of its political frontiers and also enabled it to maintain a considerable force at the expense of the native rulers while keeping wars away from its own territories. Finally they helped a smooth transition from hegemony to paramountcy as the fiction of the sovereignty of the native ruler could be conveniently maintained for such time as was necessary. But it also created certain very undesirable results. The amount demanded from the native rulers, in payment of the expenses of the subsidiary force, was invariably heavy and to pay it the native rulers were forced to practise virtual extortion on their subjects as seen in the case of Oudh. This system accelerated the process of internal decay as it gave security to the native rulers without proportionate responsibility for the welfare of their subjects. The subsidiary force invariably became the bulwark of reaction. The protection afforded by the Company bred corruption and vice among the native princes and their states virtually became the backwaters of feudalism in India.

The regimes of Lord Hastings, Amherst, Ellenborough, and Hardinge saw the further expansion of the British paramountcy in India. During this period of 35 years (1813-1848) large areas were added to the growing British empire. The Nepal War, the Third Maratha War, the Burmese wars, the Sikh wars,

and the annexation of Sind virtually made the Company the paramount power in India. With Lord Dalhousie came into operation the last important phase in this imperial expansion. Lord Dalhousie is remembered for his ingenious "Doctrine of Lapse" by which several states were annexed to the British dominions. This doctrine refused to accept the validity of the Hindu law of succession whereby a ruler, in the absence of a son to inherit the succession to the throne, was permitted to adopt a successor as his legal heir. Lord Dalhousie declared it to be the sole prerogative of the Company to recognize such adoptions. By this expedient of non-recognition, Satara (1848), Jaipur and Sambhalpur (1849), Baghat (1850), Udaipur (1852), Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur (1854) were annexed. Berar was annexed on the ground of the inability of the Nizam to pay arrears of monies due to the Company, while Oudh (1854) was annexed to end misgovernment by the Nawab. State after state was thus swallowed up by the voracious appetite of the East India Company's rulers in India and by 1856 the Company had become the suzerain power in India. The revolution which began with the Battle of Plassey in 1857 had fulfilled itself.

IX

The emergency of the East India Company as the paramount power in India was more than a political revolution. With it began an economic, social and cultural revolution in Indian life. As the Company's dominions increased, India was, as seldom before, brought under a uniform system of administration out of which, decades hence, was to emerge the unity of the Indian nation. The introduction of the railway, telegraph and all those appurtenances of the modern age were results, though indirectly, of the British impact on India. The regime of Lord William Bentinck (1828-1835) stands in direct contrast to that of a Wellesley or a Dalhousie. Bentinck was responsible for introducting a number of reforms aimed at the suppression of long-standing social evils like female infanticide and widow-burning, for the suppression of robbery and crime as in the case of the Thugs. The British had also introduced some

very salutary principles like the rule of law and order and the promulgation of an equal and uniform code of law for all. This aspect of their work had just begun and it accomplished its aim only during the next 90 years, the unfolding of which story is the subject of the succeeding pages.

The far reaching changes brought about by the rapid expansion of the British power gave severe jolts to certain traditional patterns of life all over the country. The British empire was as much the handiwork of ambitious empire-builders as a progeny of the Industrial Revolution and the emergent mercantilist-capitalism. Within the first eighty years of its existence the East India Company had increased its capital from £ 33,133 6s. 8d. to £ 1,500,000 in addition to which the Company had £ 700,000 which was available as loan to Parliament. Its servants like Clive had amassed fortunes and the profits made by it were colossal. But these were not the readily understood implications of the rule of the East India Company. What unsettled life more was a number of factors like the systems of land tenure, law and administration which the Company had introduced. These brought harassment and suffering to several important elements of the population. Against these there were revolts, the greatest of which was the Great Revolt of 1857. A captive people brooded in sullenness and occasionally erupted into violent resistance against the sweeping tide of change. The ruination of the Zamindars of Bengal under the impact of the early administrative measures found determined though futile hostility in several revolts. The revolt of the Rajas of Dhalbhum (1759-1764), the Rangpur Rebellion (1783), the Bishnupur Revolt (1789), the Rebellion of the Chuars (1799), the uprisings at Banaras and Rai Barreily (1810-1816), the Kol disturbances (1831-1832), the revolts of the tribal peoples like the Khonds (1846) and the Santhals (1855-1856), the struggle of the Poligars, (1801-1805), the Ramoshi uprisings (1826-1829) and numerous others in scattered parts of the country were signs of the gathering storm-clouds, symptoms of an ailment that had gone deep down into the very vitals of an ancient society. These could not grow into a general insurrection for obvious reasons and the forces pitted against them gave them little chance of

success. But they serve to highlight the fact that the country, far from being contented and peaceful, was a smouldering mass of agrarian and urban discontent waiting to spout forth into an insurrection.

The Company had built its empire on the exploits of its mercenary armies and among their ranks too there were signs of restiveness. This broke out into several mutinies. There were the mutiny of the White Officers in 1766, the Vellore Mutiny of 1807, the Mutiny of the 47th Bengal Regiment on the eve of the First Burmese War, the refusal of four Bengal regiments to serve in Sind, the Govindgarh mutiny of 1849 and the mutiny of the 38th Bengal Native Infantry in 1852—all preludes to the Great Revolt of 1857. All these had exposed the disturbed state of mind among the mercenary soldiers suffering racial discrimination and unsatisfactory conditions of service. To this dissatisfaction was added the bitter discontent of the dispossessed Indian princes like the Peshwa and the Rani of Jhansi and all these awaited a suitable spark to develop into a general conflagration. The causes that provided the spark appeared trivial but brought into the open all the seething discontent.

In the month of April 1857 the soldiers of the Bengal Army refused to use the new cartridges. This indiscipline was met with court-martials and executions of the ring-leaders. But the Bengal Army broke out into a general mutiny; the soldiers shot down their officers, freed the prisoners and marched in the direction of Delhi. Rebellious troops from different areas soon converged on the Mughal capital where Bahadur Shah III, an old and ailing man, was declared as the Emperor of India. The Revolt spread to Lucknow, Bareilly, Kanpur, Agra, Jhansi and others centres in Central India but generally failed to affect western and southern areas of the country. Likewise it could not win the support of the Sikhs who now became loyal supporters of the British and rendered valuable aid to the beleaguered Company. The Company also won the support and help of the Gurkhas. On the rebel side the leadership went to Nanasaheb, the son of the late deposed Peshwa, the Rani of Jhansi, Laxmibai, and Tatya Tope, a Maratha general. During the course of this Revolt innumerable acts of heroism were

performed ; Hindus fought alongside Muslims and a large part of the country had risen in arms against alien domination. There were also atrocities, as much on the Indian as on the British side. The Revolt maintained its nature of a military uprising and failed to develop into a general insurrection of the masses of the people. Clearly the British were in a position to muster far more effective military resources and the Revolt was crushed with unparalleled ferocity and deliberate vindictiveness. The Revolt was the last desperate act of the forces of freedom in India under the feudal leadership and is often described as the First War of Independence. There is no doubt that the leadership was inspired by a hatred of foreign rule but it is doubtful whether, historically speaking, this was a general sentiment consciously understood all over the country. If this had been the case the Sikhs would have thrown themselves on the rebel side and would not have rendered signal service to the British cause. On the other hand neither can the Revolt be described purely as a Sepoy Mutiny as was the fashion in books of Indian history of the period written by members of the then ruling race. It was much wider in scope and at least in large areas of the United Provinces and Central India large segments of population, outside the ranks of the ex-sepoys of the East India Company, were both emotionally and actually involved in this struggle.

The Revolt was crushed but it shook the Company to its very foundations. As a direct result of the uprising the East India Company was swept out of existence and the administration of India was taken over by the British Crown, with which act opened a new chapter in the history of modern India.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE RISE OF MODERN INDIA

I

THE GREAT REVOLT rose and spent itself like a sudden storm. Northern India tossed uneasily in its grip for a while. It destroyed the Company but left the Empire untouched. On the 1st of November 1858 at Allahabad, amidst imperial pomp and pageantry, was read the Queen's Declaration which in dignified but cautious terms spelled out the British political intentions in India for the future.

The passing of the Company was an administrative event. In the city of London, where some 257 years ago it was born, a few feeble protests were made in its behalf. The great John Stuart Mill penned the petition to the Crown which attempted to demonstrate that the liquidation of the Company was an act of vicarious suffering for its share-holders. The petition pointed out that the Company had served the British nation truly and well and that they claimed "their full share of the responsibility of the manner in which India has practically been governed. That responsibility is to them not a subject of humiliation, but of pride. They are conscious that their advice and initiative have been, and have deserved to be, a great and potent element in the conduct of affairs in India, and they feel complete assurance that the more attention is bestowed and the more light thrown upon India and its administration, the more evident it will become that the government in which they have borne a part has been not only one of the purest in intention, but one of the most beneficient in act...."

Beginning in 1600 as a commercial corporation, the Company,

aided by the pluck of its officers and the good luck of its shareholders, had grown into an empire. Within a century it had fought as many as 100 battles and its victorious arms had been carried across the length and breadth of the land. Beginning merely as tax-gatherers of the moribund Mughals the Company had raised a new empire over the disintegrating parts of the House of Timur. As its territories increased its commercial privileges began to be restricted and were finally ended by the Charter Act of 1833. By 1853 it was declared to be a trustee, on behalf of the Crown and the Parliament, over the Indian possessions. The "funeral marches of the Company to the grave" were marked by the Charter Acts of 1784, 1793, 1813, 1833 and 1853 which successively increased the supervisory and controlling powers of the British Parliament over its affairs and the Great Revolt of 1857 only led this process to its ultimate conclusion.

The Company was swept off into the debris of history but the Empire remained, a little chastened by the experience of 1857 but as strong as ever. The Governor-General was now also called the Viceroy and the old Court of Directors was replaced by the Secretary of State, a member of the British Cabinet. The British Crown now reigned as well as ruled over the vast land-mass of the Indian sub-continent.

The British empire in India radically differed from the empires of old. Its creators were the children of the Industrial Revolution and the *protegés* of the nascent mercantilist class in search of markets all over the world. This empire was part of a world-wide economic system and served as the king-pin of that grand edifice on which "the sun never set". India had been invaded time and again by foreign hordes and the British represented but the most recent wave of such invasions. The Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Huns, Arabs, Turks and Mongols had broken through the north-western mountain walls and set up their empires. But all of these became assimilated, in varying degrees, with the Indian *milieu* and became parts of an Indian political system. The British came across the seas and they had discovered that if the seas separated them from their homeland they also united them with the power at home. The empire

raised and maintained by the efforts of Clive, Wellesley, Dalhousie, Curzon and Linlithgow remained till the last a British empire in India.

The rule of this empire operated in a dimension quite different from the rule of the Mughal empire. The empires of old rested on a hierarchy of feudal overlords the foremost among whom was the emperor himself. The intensity of the impact of their rule diminished with increasing distance. The impact of the new British empire was total in its administrative and political implications. This new empire was based on a swift and revolutionary system of continental communications and was served by a new type of bureaucracy. Under its aegis a new legal system came into operation and a new system of education was introduced. It confronted the Indian people with a profoundly disturbing challenge and the response to it, by necessity, had to be revolutionary in its form. This response came in the shape of nationalism.

The aftermath of the Great Revolt left a legacy of bitterness behind. It cut asunder the tenuous bonds that linked two different races together. Never again were the white and brown races to meet together in any felicitous relationship. The two races stood on the opposite sides of the fence in terms of superiority and inferiority. It was a firmly held and oft-repeated belief amongst the members of the ruling race that the British empire in India rested on the White Man's prestige which could be jeopardized only at great peril to the position of the White Man. It was an empire of colour over which the White Man ruled and it created reflexes among the subject race that were characterized by a new awareness of race and complexion of the skin.

II

The political history of India from 1858 to 1947 is increasingly the chronicle of a great transformation that was coming over the land. There were three specific problems which the British in India had to face during this period. The first was the problem of imperial consolidation which involved them in frontier politics and wars; the second was the problem of

administration and the last was the constitutional challenge which could be met finally only with the grand denouement of the transfer of power in India.

The frontiers of this empire engaged the attention of the rulers over a considerable time. The annexation of the Punjab and the Sind had brought the British to the outer fringes of the mountain world of Afghanistan. Afghanistan, in the words of Lord Lytton (1876-1880) was like "an earthen pipkin between two iron pots" one of which was Russia. The expansion of the Tsarist empire in Central Asia with the successive fall of Tashkent, Khokand, Bokhara and Samarkand between 1864 and 1869 inevitably made of Afghanistan the battleground for the clash of the British and Russian empires. Earlier the British had been involved in Afghan politics and the consequence was the First Afghan War (1839-1842). Now the Russians had begun to show a disturbing interest in the Afghan kingdom. The Tsarist envoy Stolietoff had left his troops at the border before marching to Kabul, the Afghan capital. The Afghan ruler Sher Ali (1868-1878) had been under considerable Russian pressure and Stolietoff had succeeded in getting a treaty concluded with him. The Russians had given an assurance to him that they would protect him against aggression, an assurance which earlier the British were chary of offering to him. The presence of the Russian envoy in Kabul led to a similar British demand which became an ultimatum to Sher Ali in November 1878. A British expeditionary force followed and Sher Ali fled the country. The British concluded with his son and successor Yakub Khan the Treaty of Gandmak on the 26th of May 1879. By the terms of this treaty the British exercised control over the external relations of the Afghan kingdom and some territory was also ceded to them. For a while things seemed to be working out smoothly but this proved to be a lull before the storm which burst in the form of a general Afghan revolt. The revolt was crushed by British arms and Yakub Khan was replaced by Abdur Rehman, Sher Ali's nephew and erstwhile *protegé* of the Russians. The tide of the Russian expansion was stemmed and British influence regained its controlling position in Kabul. Afghanistan had become a pawn in European politics and the fall of Sher Ali may be des-

cribed as one of the effects of the Treaty of Berlin. Afghanistan, from the British point of view, was an area of power vacuum in which the Russians could step in—which the British were eager to prevent at all costs. The Russian Forward Policy in Central Asia was met by a British Forward Policy. In 1884 Russia had added Merv to her possessions and the British protested, whereupon the Russians showed their willingness to discuss a proposal for the delimitation of the Russo-Afghan frontier. In 1885 the Russians drove off the Afghans from Panjdeh and occupied it and war cries were once again in the air. However, war was averted and an amicable settlement was reached. In 1886 the Afghan-Russian frontier was formally fixed as running from the Oxus to the Zulfikar Pass. Finally by the agreement of 1895 the remaining trouble spots in frontier disputes were eliminated and Afghanistan was firmly held within the British imperial orbit. Chitral and Gilgit rose in tribal revolts in 1893 and 1897 and these had to be crushed with costly military operations. The constantly disturbed state of the north-west frontier made it imperative for the administration to lay down and follow a firm frontier policy. The first step in this direction was taken with the establishment of frontier outposts and the opening up of modern communications in the area. The frontier districts were also separated from the Punjab and constituted into a North-West Frontier province, first under a Chief Commissioner and then under a Governor. From time to time the tribes gave trouble and repeated campaigns had to be undertaken to hold the districts. A policy of generous subsidies to the tribal chiefs, alternating with that of show of force when necessary, was adopted and followed until the end of the period.

The British control over Afghan affairs proved galling to Afghan pride. The country was simmering with discontent which broke into the open when Aman Ullah, the grandson of Abdur Rehman, raided British-Indian territory. This led to the Third Afghan War (1919) which was ended with the Treaty of Rawalpindi concluded in August 1919. Another treaty signed two years later fixed British-Afghan relations on a firm basis. The Russian Revolution put a temporary stop to the fear of Russian expansion in Central Asia and Afghanistan

continued to remain in the British sphere of influence until the withdrawal of the British Power from India.

The fear of Russia also loomed large in the British involvement in the politics of the north-eastern frontier of India. On this frontier lay the states of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet. The Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-1816 had effectively hemmed in that mountain kingdom by British Indian territory. While the normal forms of diplomatic usage were obsequiously observed by the British in their dealings with Nepal the relations of that kingdom with other powers were so controlled as to subserve the overall British imperial purpose. At about the same time the state of Sikkim was made into a British protectorate and served as a wedge separating Nepal from Bhutan. The war with Bhutan came about in 1864-1869 and the immediate provocation for it was the Bhutanese raid into Indian territory for the purposes of carrying away slaves. A British mission was sent to discuss such incursions but was temporarily overpowered by the Bhutanese who compelled it to sign a humiliating treaty. This treaty was promptly denounced and the Bhutanese were defeated in a military engagement. The territory known as the *duars* was annexed in lieu of an annual payment and Bhutan was reduced to the status of a British protectorate.

Tibet next demanded attention. It was a land of romance and mystery ruled by a hierarchy of monks led by the Dalai Lama. Since 1774, when the first British Mission, the Bogle Mission, was sent, spasmodic attempts were made to penetrate this land of the Buddhist theocracy. In its imperial march the British empire impinged on the Himalayan foothills and Tibet. A Tibetan incursion into Sikkim was driven off in 1887 and later in 1890 the Anglo-Chinese Convention grappled with the problem of the demarcation of the Tibetan-Sikkimese frontier.

The international position of Tibet has always been somewhat peculiar. The Chinese have claimed suzerainty over Tibet and have regarded the *Amban* posted at Lhasa as their governor. The Tibetans, on their side, regarded themselves as independent and looked upon the Chinese *Amban* as a diplomatic envoy of a strong and meddlesome power. Occasionally the Tibetans sent gifts to the Chinese emperors and these were

invariably understood by the Chinese as tribute. As far as the British were concerned Tibet, at least in the formative period of the British empire, existed as a far-off mysterious land. But the expansion of Tsarist Russia created a new situation in Anglo-Tibetan relations, such as they were. During 1898-1901 the Tibetan affairs were watched with anxious concern by the British. The activities of one Dorjieff, a Russian Buddhist, were the cause of this concern. Dorjieff was suspected of being a Russian imperial agent. The Tibetans, on their side, were anxious to shake off the Chinese imperial claims on their country and were not averse to enlisting Russian help if such could be secured. Dorjieff had led Tibetan missions to Moscow in 1898, 1900 and 1901 and it was generally suspected that Russia was keen on extending her protectorate over Tibet though this was vehemently denied by the Russian authorities in their communications to the British Ambassador to Moscow. Once again the fear of the lengthening Russian shadow over Central Asia began to worry the British official thinking and in 1903 Lord Curzon proposed sending a mission to Lhasa which became the British invasion of Tibet under Colonel Younghusband. The British forces marched into Lhasa on the 3rd of August 1904, and subsequently a convention was signed by which the Tibetans agreed to pay a war indemnity, and allow the British to open trade marts in Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok. According to the terms of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of June 1906 Britain agreed not to annex Tibetan territory nor to interfere with the internal administration of Tibet. On their part the Chinese agreed not to allow any foreign power to interfere with Tibetan autonomy and territorial integrity. Further by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 the two powers accepted the fact of the suzerainty of the Chinese over Tibet by signifying that they would conduct their political relations with Tibet through the modality of the Chinese good offices. In all this the Tibetans were scarcely consulted. The Tibetans were restive and taking advantage of the Chinese Revolution of 1911-1912 expelled the Chinese envoy and his troops. By virtue of this action the Tibetans had declared themselves free and by 1918 the Tibetans had become independent in practice as well as in theory. In 1950, however, the Chinese commun-

ists carried out a military invasion of Tibet and effected an outright annexation of Tibetan territory.

If the fear of the Russians led to the British involvements in Afghanistan and Tibet the fear of the French led to the completion of the conquest of Burma. The two Burmese wars (1824-1826 and 1852) had added Arakan, Tenasserim and Pegu to the British-Indian empire. By 1875 the French were firmly entrenched in Indo-China and were eager to seize a chance to expand their commercial and political interests in Burma too. King Thibaw had sent a mission to Paris in May 1883 and the British suspicions were roused. They began to put pressure on the French and the latter stalled as best as they could. It was announced that a commercial treaty with Burma was successfully negotiated and under the terms of this treaty the French were to establish a bank at Mandalay, finance the construction of a railway line from Mandalay to Toungoo, compete with the powerful British Irawaddy Flotilla Company in running shipping services and obtain several other important commercial and economic privileges. The immediate provocation for the Third Anglo-Burmese War came when King Thibaw fined the Bombay Burmah Trading Company. His act was construed as arbitrary and high-handed and redress was demanded. Finally in 1886 the British army intervened and the independence of the Burmese nation was extinguished. Thibaw was deposed and exiled and the country was annexed though its pacification was not completed for another eleven years.

The conquest of Burma and Ceylon (effected at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries) and the extension of the sphere of influence over Afghanistan and Tibet had settled the frontiers of the British empire in India. The fall of the Tsars and internal commotion in China eliminated, at least temporarily, the danger of Russian expansion in Central Asia. By the end of the 19th century a balance of power among the French, Dutch and the British had evolved all over South-East and Farther Asia. The British empire now rested upon the well-organized land-mass of south and south-east Asia and had at its disposal the valuable resources in materials and manpower from these lands. In this empire India played a

vital role. Its troops were used to fight Britain's imperial wars in Asia, Africa and Europe and its strategic materials provided the British with unquestioned superiority in the contemporary world. The markets of Asia and Africa were held captive for British enterprise and the decades of the first half of the present century witnessed the steady development of the material and imperial prosperity of the British empire. But a crisis was brewing within the body of this very empire and when this crisis was resolved after the Second World War new nations came into an existence of proud independence.

III

We have stated earlier that the three specific problems which confronted the British until the opening years of the present century were the problem of the imperial frontiers, the problem of imperial administration and the problem of constitutional development in the conquered territories. The first was solved by annexations as in the case of Burma and the creation of neutralized zones like Afghanistan and Tibet. In the administrative sphere the first problem was that of the Indian States. By 1857 all the major Indian States were brought within the iron frame-work of the imperial state. The Queen's Declaration of 1858 had assured the Indian princes that the paramount power would scrupulously honour the various treaty obligations defining their powers and privileges. There were to be no more "Doctrine of Lapse" and annexations of princely territories. In practice, if the powers of the princes were tightly controlled their financial and economic privileges were generously continued. The keynote of the British policy towards the Indian states was indicated in a speech by Lord Curzon when he stated that "the sovereignty of the Crown is everywhere unchallenged; it has itself laid down the limitations of its own prerogative". It was, then, clearly understood on both sides as to where the substance of power lay. The treaties which bound the Indian states to the paramount power had neutralized them as political entities. In times of stress, as during the two World Wars, the Princes could and did prove to be very valuable allies for the imperial power.

They vied with each other in offering their contributions to the embattled imperial power and their pledges of loyalty sounded quite touching when the rest of the country was in revolt.

The existence of the states created two Indias alongside of each other. One was the so-called Indian India of the Maharajas, Nabobs and fief-holders of all grades and varieties parcelled out into some 677 entities, isolated from one another but firmly tied to the paramount power. Many of these states were backwaters of the worst stagnation and reaction and with rare exceptions proved to be expensive, if not oppressive, relics of a medieval India. So long as the princes kept their personal and social adventures within discreet bounds they had to fear neither Caesar nor Pope. Their rule was autarchic and in many cases savoured of an antiquated despotism. Of their people they needed to have no fear for the paramount power was always there to suppress any popular uprising. Within the territorial limits of their dominions the Princes had vast powers with practically no responsibilities of good governance to their people. In the case of flagrant maladministration or scandalous personal behaviour the paramount power intervened sharply and swiftly as in Mysore (1831) and Baroda (1875), where the administration was taken over by the imperial power for a period. Out of this motley crowd of 677 states only five had direct relations with the Crown as represented by the Government of India who maintained Residents at their courts. Some 172 states were controlled by the Agents to the Governor-General and the rest were placed under the jurisdiction of the provincial governments. Some of the states proved to be very progressive and the level of advancement in such states as Mysore, Baroda and Travancore was far above that reached even by the British Indian provinces.

Then there were the provinces. By 1912 the imperial capital was shifted to Delhi and the boundaries and the number of the provinces came to be stabilized. Until 1935 Burma was administered as a province of India and this created a complicated situation. At this time also Sind and Orissa were created separate provinces. From 1858 to 1947, during the period of some 90 years, ruled 20 Governors-General. The administration

of India was increasingly brought under the control of British economic and political interests and reflected, in varying degrees, the imperial needs of the United Kingdom. In the earlier period, as C. Y. Chintamani describes it, "the policy of the Government alternated between modest progress and strong reaction." It depended very much, at least in the earlier period, "not upon the force of Indian opinion as there was no organized Indian opinion but upon the changing policies of the British Government and the British Parliament. There was a succession of more or less good viceroys beginning with Canning and ending with Ripon—they included Lawrence, Mayo and Northbrook—but there was also Lord Lytton, who tried to undo as much as possible of what his predecessors had done. If on the affirmative side the establishment of the universities was the greatest thing done by the Government after the Mutiny, on the negative side there was the fresh combination of executive and judicial functions which had been separated before it, there was the Vernacular Press Act, there was the Forward Frontier Policy involving disastrous financial consequences to India. There was the Arms Act and there were the repeated attempts to frustrate the aim of Indians to enter the superior services of the counrty—I mean civil as there was no thought at all of their admission to the commissioned ranks of the army. But on the credit side must also be mentioned the Indian Councils Act of 1861, the steady progress of education and the introduction of local self-governing institutions" (*Indian Politics Since the Mutiny*, pp. 13-14). In this period the administrations of Lord Lytton (1876-1880), Lord Ripon (1880-1884), Lord Dufferin (1884-1888), Lord Curzon (1899-1905), Lord Chelmsford (1916-1921), Lord Linlithgow (1936-1944) and Lord Wavell (1944-1947) were noteworthy for developments in Indian government and politics. Lord Lytton passed the Vernacular Press Act aimed at gagging the Indian language press which indicated that the press in India had now become sufficiently vocal and critical to attract punitive attention from the British authorities. It was also during Lytton's time that the Second Afghan War was fought. Lord Ripon was a great liberal under whose administration the first steps in the introduction of Local Self-Government were taken. The

controversy occasioned by the Ilbert Bill made Ripon's regime especially noteworthy. This bill sought to do away with the racial discrimination in the judicial services whereby a white culprit could not be tried and sentenced by an Indian judge. But the reaction to this proposed bill from the white community in India was so bitter that it had to be considerably modified before being enacted.

The regime of Lord Dufferin marks the high water-mark of British imperialism in India. The final annexation of Burma was now carried out with the termination of the Third Anglo-Burmese War. Significantly enough the first session of the Indian National Congress was held at this time (1885). By the time Lord Curzon came on the scene Indian nationalism had entered a turbulent phase. Curzon provoked popular protests over the partition of Bengal into two separate provinces for the purpose of administrative convenience. This was taken by the people of Bengal as an attack on their provincial and cultural unity and the agitation for the annulment of the partition of Bengal assumed a national form under the leadership of Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. The partition of Bengal was finally annulled in 1911 and Indian nationalism won its first round in its fight against the British administration.

The careers of Lord Chelmsford and Lord Linlithgow were memorable for the steps that India took along the road to constitutional advancement. The Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 and the Government of India Act of 1935 mark the stages on the steep road traversed by India towards the eventual abolition of alien rule in the country. The dominant phenomenon was that of the rising tempo of Indian nationalism.

The birth of Indian nationalism in its organized form is often equated with the origin of the Indian National Congress in 1885. The reason for this is that from 1905 onwards the Congress increasingly became the organ and expression of this nationalism. The beginnings of Indian nationalism, however, must be traced back to the immediate post-1857 period. The immediate result of the defeat of the revolt was despair. The cruelty and barbarity involved in the process of crushing the revolt spread a wave of horror. The futility of an ill-equipped people rising

in rebellion against a ruthless armed power was demonstrated by the rapidity with which the revolt was crushed. The protest had now to seek new means and new forms of expression. This new dimension was opened by the effects of Western education and the assimilation of the social and political ideals of the Western world. The work of Christian missionaries in the religious and educational fields created its own results in the rise of a new elite dedicated to social reform. The pioneer, the first modern Indian, was Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the movement started under his guidance, the Brahmo Samaj, became the instrument of this neo-Hinduism. Early Indian nationalism had both religious and racial overtones. It was only at a later stage that a distinct political and economic content was acquired by it. This content developed along with the growth of the Indian National Congress which attacked the regime on two levels. At first the Congress demanded increasing association of Indians with the administration of their country and as a result of the pressure of its demands the reforms of 1909 were offered as a concession to this militant Indian nationalism. The rise of the ideas of self-determination after World War I produced its own repercussions in India and the Congress soon began to demand transfer of power leading to complete independence. The British response to it was embodied in the preamble to the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919.

We must also deal, though briefly, with certain processes at work within the corpus of British ideals and institutions in India. There were two processes at work; one was that of centralization which began with the Regulating Act of 1773 and continued until 1909. The second phase began in 1909 and found its fruition in the Government of India Act of 1935. After the failure of the experiment in "dual government" after the acquisition of the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765, the Company, in 1772, decided to "stand forth as Diwan" as much in practice as in theory. The Regulating Act of 1773 set up the office of the Governor-General of Bengal with his council of four members with powers to supervise the work of the Bombay and Madras administrations. The Act also created a Supreme Court of Judicature at Calcutta charged with the task of administering the British Law and having jurisdiction

over British subjects. The experience of the work of the council, involving unseemly differences among its members, led to the Amending Act of 1781 by which the Governor-General was given the power to override his council in matters which, in his discretion, affected "the interests of the Company, or the safety or tranquillity of the British possessions in India." Alongside was carried out the process of the "decommercialization" of the Company when, in 1774, the commercial work of the Company was transferred to a Board of Trade. This process was carried a step further when the Charter Act of 1813 abolished the Company's monopoly over the Indian trade but retained its control over the China trade. This too was abolished twenty years later by the Charter Act of 1833. This was inevitable as the Company had now become a great territorial power and as such could not be allowed to continue its earlier role of a commercial corporation trading in a monopolistic manner in territories over which it ruled.

The Amending Act of 1781 attempted to create the separation of the executive from the judiciary by defining the respective areas of jurisdiction. Separate councils for the two presidencies of Bombay and Madras were created by Pitt's India Act of 1784. The Charter Act of 1833 marked another step towards the creation of an imperial government in India when it changed the status of the Governor-General of Bengal to that of Governor-General of India. The legislative powers of the Bombay and Madras presidencies were withdrawn now only to be restored to them in 1861. The Act also envisaged the work of codification of the laws to be enforced uniformly all over the territories of the Company. The Charter Act of 1853 set up the first legislative council with the addition of certain members to the Governor-General's Council for the purposes of enacting laws and regulations. On the transfer of power to the Crown the Governor-General became directly responsible for the administration of India to the Secretary of State who was himself a member of the British Cabinet. By the Act of 1861, while his council was given authority to enact laws for the whole of British India, the Governor-General was granted the power to issue ordinances in cases of emergency and for backward areas and tribes whose welfare was considered to be

his special concern. The Indian Councils' Act of 1892 led to the enlargement and reconstitution of the Governor-General's Legislative Council. The members constituting this Council were of two categories. There were the officials of the Governor-General's administration to whose number was added a number of non-official members who were either nominated or were indirectly "elected" by the provincial legislative councils and the European Chamber of Commerce of Calcutta, indicative of the importance of the British mercantilist and finance capital in the life of the country. The Council was permitted to discuss the budget and the members were given the right to ask questions to solicit information from the administration. This right, however, was hemmed in by several restrictive conditions. The Governor-General had the power of veto and thus his was the highest authority in the country.

Between 1860 and 1900 there was a considerable growth of public life in the country. The press was often very critical of the actions of the government and gave vent to popular feeling within the frame-work of the existing press laws which were fairly drastic. Several educational and community associations had sprung up all over the country and clearly the time had come for the prominent community leaders in the country to band themselves to form a national platform from which could be given authoritative expression to educated Indian opinion. The formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was the most important landmark in the history of organized public life in the country. The government, on its part, also felt the need of having such a sounding board for eliciting what the leading sections of Indians thought and felt about the activities of the administration and during the early years of its career the Congress enjoyed a discreet encouragement from the government. The resolutions of the Congress during these early years were full of expressions of loyalty to the Crown and the criticism it made demanded an increasing association of Indians with the legislative and administrative work of the government of the country. The first British answer to this was the expedient of the nominated "non-official" member whose very nomination made him generally pliant. Increasingly, however, the Congress was getting radi-

calized and the demand now changed from association with power to the sharing of power within the framework of the implicit sovereignty of the Crown. The march of events was so rapid as to move the Congress in the direction of open conflict with the government. Thus by 1920 the Congress declared its objective as "the attainment of *Swaraj* (self-rule) by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means". This was clarified further in 1927 as "complete national independence".

The British reactions to these changes in political ideals were stated primarily, at least in the earlier stages, in administrative terms. Thus there developed a fundamental cleavage between the administration and the premier political organisation in the country. While the British thought primarily in administrative terms the Congress was making fundamental political demands. The Act of 1861 had set up legislative councils which were then looked upon as the means by "which the Executive government obtain advice and assistance in their legislation, and the public derive the advantage of full publicity being ensured at every stage of the law-making process—the Councils are not deliberative bodies with respect to any subject but that of immediate legislation before them. They cannot enquire into grievances, call for information or examine the conduct of the executive." This state of affairs was not fundamentally altered by the enactment of 1892. The partition of Bengal and the nationalist agitation following it created a revolutionary situation in large parts of the country. This agitation was carried on from two fronts : the immediate political objective was the annulment of the partition of Bengal while the long-term aim was to carry on a successful struggle against foreign economic domination through the programme of boycott and *swadeshi* or insistence on the use of Indian-made goods. Though the agitation was suppressed for the time at least it was felt that another measure of concessions was due. This came in the form of the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. Lord Morley was then the Secretary of State and Lord Minto was the Governor-General. Under the Reforms the sizes of the legislatures were enlarged and the elected element was introduced for the first time. The electorate that was now introduced was,

however, of a peculiar type, being broken up into communities and special interests. There was, of course, no universal adult franchise—which was to come only after the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of India in 1950. The Act took care to ensure that the official majority dominated the legislatures. Thus in the imperial legislature, of the total number of 60 members 37 were officials and of these 28 were nominated. In the provinces too the expedient of nominating non-official members was used to secure an official majority. The powers of these legislatures were increased but such increases in no way diminished the authority of the executive as represented by the governors and the Governor-General.

These reforms mark a distinct stage in the evolution of Indian politics. For the first time an explicit recognition was given to the theory that the interests of the Muslims were different from those of the rest of the population. On the government side it was pointed out in defence of the acceptance of the principle of communal representation that the Muslims themselves clamoured for separate electorates as they were apprehensive that they would be swamped by the non-Muslim majority. But it was pointed out in the official pronouncement at that time that the principle of "division by creeds and classes means the creation of political camps organized against each other, and teaches men to think as partisans and not as citizens". Once this principle was accepted and enforced it was logically to lead the Muslim community into thinking that the differences separating them from the rest of the people in the country were so fundamental as to constitute them into a separate *nation* and the culmination came in the Muslim League demand for Pakistan, a separate nation, within three decades of the Morley-Minto Reforms. The Congress reaction to the Reforms was sharply critical. The Congress expressed its grave dissatisfaction with the acceptance of the principle of communal representation and pointed out that the councils were dominated by official majorities and as such could hardly be described as representative of popular opinion. Even the moderate politicians, on whom great official hopes were pinned, were dissatisfied.

If the Reforms failed to satisfy the public opinion the various acts of racial discrimination against Indian settlers by South Africa and Canada enraged it. The outbreak of the First World War, however, revealed the general feeling which was one of loyalty to the regime. The people cooperated with the war effort in a generous measure and Mahatma Gandhi, who was just beginning his great career in India after his work in South Africa, urged recruitment of Indians to the armed forces of the Empire. There was a general expectation that after the War there would be a substantial constitutional advance in India both as a result of the pressure of the new ideas and as a gesture of gratitude on the part of the administration for the help given by the country in Britain's hour of need. But the Indian and British minds were working in different dimensions. The Indian political leaders were thinking in terms of gradual transfer of power and the creation of democratic institutions while the administration thought purely in terms of association of Indians, in a larger measure than before, with the administrative processes in the country. This was expressed by Lord Minto in the course of his opening address to the new Imperial Legislative Council in January 1910 when he said that representative government "in its Western sense is totally inapplicable to the Indian Empire, and would be uncongenial to the traditions of the Eastern peoples—that Indian conditions do not admit of popular representation—that the safety and welfare of this country must depend on the supremacy of British administration—and that that supremacy can, in no circumstances, be delegated to any kind of representative assembly. We have aimed at the reform of enlargement of our councils, but not at the creation of parliaments." The Indian leaders, from their study of Western political thought and institutions in the universities set up by the British themselves, had come to believe that representative government was an ideal worthy of universal application and that it was a compulsion of history. Under the circumstances, therefore, with two diametrically opposite points of view at work, conflict was inevitable. The policy adopted by the British administration in India had created dissatisfaction in the very middle class which was to a large extent the creation of the Western

impact on India. The nascent Indian industries like the textile felt that the Government had failed to perform its primary duty of protecting national industries against foreign competition. The shortages caused by the war caused inflation which hit the average consumer and to this was added a racial element when instances were reported of white men treating the brown with contempt. The climate was now favourable to the growth of radicalism and the moderates in the Congress were fighting a losing battle. In South Africa Gandhi had discovered a unique method of protest against injustice and it was non-violent non-cooperation. It is not necessary at this place to go into the details of developments in Indian politics of the time, as this will be done later in the course of this work. What was becoming abundantly clear was that the radicalization of the Congress had progressed so far apace that the British concessions made out in the context of the then existing British thinking were bound to fall far short of nationalist expectations. These concessions came in the form of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919.

In the preamble to the Reform bill Mr. Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, declared in the British Parliament that "the policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." This neatly summarized the British intentions in India which were finally aimed at the creation of a Dominion of India as an integral part of the Empire at a pace which would be determined by the British Parliament. The Act envisaged a pragmatic approach to the Indian problem without going into the details of a time-bound programme of devolution of authority. It is necessary to remember here that the Reforms came as an executive decision in which Indian opinion had practically no part to play except that of acceptance of the Reforms in the form in which they were proposed. For instance the Montagu-Chelmsford Report itself had stated thus : "We conclude unhesitatingly that the history of self-

government among the nations who developed it, and spread it through the world, is decisively against the admission by the State of any divided allegiance; against the State arranging its members in any way which encourages them to think of themselves primarily as citizens of any smaller unit than itself." This was in reference to the system of communal representation against which Indian political opinion had expressed itself in no uncertain terms. These electorates continued as also the system of large official *blocs* whose presence in the legislatures "exercised from the beginning a somewhat paralysing influence over the deliberations of the councils, clothing them as it did with an air of unreality" (Horne, *Political System of British India,* p. 60). And though the pronouncement made by Mr. Montagu represented an advance over what Mr. Morley had said in 1909 the Indian political situation had so radically altered during the interval that it demanded far more than what the Reforms of 1919 were able to concede. The Congress reaction to them was that they were "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing".

The Act of 1919 led to the creation of a bi-cameral legislature at the national level. These two chambers were called the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State. Of the 145 members of the Assembly 103 were elected and the rest nominated. Of the elected members 51 were to be elected by the general constituencies, 30 by Muslims, two by the Sikhs, seven by the landlords, nine by the Europeans and four by the Indian industrial and commercial interests. In the Council of State there were 33 elected members and 27 nominated. The franchise was restricted by conditions of income and status and the total number of voters for the Council and the Assembly did not exceed 17,364 and 909,874 respectively, out of a population of some 250 million. The real power, as before, was vested in the executive and the subjects handed over to the control of the elected representatives of the people were of marginal importance. The system of government in the provinces was what was called the system of dyarchy. Under this system the subjects administered by the provincial governments were divided into the reserved and transferred heads. The provincial executive now consisted of two sections one of which comprised

the official group headed by the governor and the other consisted of ministers who were elected members of the legislatures. The executive group held the important subjects like justice and police departments, land revenue and the department of public information (propaganda) while the ministers were responsible for the working of local self-government, the public health department and certain types of public works. The governor, moreover, was given the power of overriding the ministers if such action was felt justifiable. The system was worked in the provinces from 1921 to 1937, but proved unsatisfactory.

Over the Indian political world, however, a profound change was coming, for Mahatma Gandhi had arrived on the scene. As Nehru puts it, "He did not descend from the top ; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their appalling condition. Get off the backs of these peasants and workers, he told us, all who live by their exploitation ; get rid of the system that produces this poverty and misery. Political freedom took new shape then and acquired a new content." The rising tempo of political agitation was first greeted by brutal repression which climaxed in the massacre at Jallianwallah Bagh in the Punjab when General Dyer fired 1,605 rounds into a mob of 20,000 unarmed and defenceless Indians caught within an enclosure opening into a small exit. Hundreds died and thousands were wounded. This was followed by humiliating orders which required Indians wanting to pass through a lane in Amritsar to crawl like animals and reptiles. All this only served to add fuel to the smouldering fire which was bursting into flames. Under Gandhi's leadership the Congress soon became a mass organization poised to embark on mass action. There were repeated revolts and the political leaders of the country were constantly in and out of jail. By 1929 the Congress had declared as its objective the attainment of "complete independence" and had called upon its members to bend all their energies in the task of its realization. Gandhi's technique of non-violent non-cooperation had galvanized the masses into determined action and several times the movement was almost within sight of success.

But from the very outset two problems complicated the tasks of Indian nationalism. One was the problem of the untouchables or the Scheduled Castes. The institution of untouchability had placed millions of people in positions of permanent social and economic inferiority. The middle class Hindu leadership could not claim to secure complete independence for the nation from alien domination without simultaneously opening the portals of temples and schools as well as factories and shops to millions of their own people. The Scheduled Castes had acquired a vigorous leadership in Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1893-1956) who, with his unceasing attacks on the system, had focussed the nation's attention on untouchability. The Congress, on its part, had recognized the due importance of the removal of untouchability in its programme of national emancipation and Gandhi had made it a prominent plank in his "constructive programme". In the face of bitter opposition from Hindu orthodoxy and obscurantism the untouchables had made considerable progress and the institution was declared as abolished in the Constitution of the Republic of India, adopted in 1950. In the large urban centres the institution is rapidly breaking down though in the rural areas the progress is painfully slow. The problem is essentially an economic one and it will only be solved with the economic and cultural advancement of large sections of the Indian population, now condemned to what amounts to a living social and cultural death.

The problem of Hindu-Muslim relations was another vexing problem. This assumed an accentuated form in the 20's and 30's. After the defeat of the Great Revolt of 1857 the Muslims had withdrawn into a sullen isolation. The Hindus had taken avidly to Western education and naturally at the turn of the 19th century they had outstripped the Muslims in educational and economic advancement. The British had followed the policy of reconciliation with the Hindus for a while until the Hindus became imbued with nationalistic ideas. Then the policy was changed to one of encouragement to the Muslims especially in their educational efforts. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the leader of the Muslim renaissance, received considerable support from the British, and his efforts finally led to the establishment of a Muslim college at Aligarh in 1875. This college

gradually developed into the Aligarh Muslim University and became the birthplace of the new Islamic movement in the country. By 1906 the Muslims had begun to demand constitutional safeguards and separate electorates. The All-India Muslim League was founded in this year and it became the spearhead of the Muslim irredentist movement culminating in the creation of Pakistan in 1947. Though the Muslim League became increasingly the mouthpiece of irredentism there was an influential section of Nationalist Muslims who argued that religion should have no place in politics. However, this section ultimately failed in persuading the Muslim masses to reject the demand for the partition of India. But before the demand for Pakistan was officially put forward by the Muslim League in 1940 there was considerable cooperation between the two communities in the national movement.

In the 30's the political crisis began to deepen. The Congress had already passed the two earlier stages of demands for association and sharing of power and had arrived at a point where it could not be satisfied with anything less than a complete transfer of sovereignty from the British to Indian hands. On the British side the problem, which was once viewed purely from the administrative angle, now received recognition as a constitutional problem. To solve this the three Round Table Conferences were held in London during 1930-1932. The first conference was held without the participation of the Congress but at the second the Mahatma himself was present. But it floundered on issues like the representation of the people of the Indian states by their rulers. Then came the "Communal Award" of 1932 by which the constituencies were sought to be divided into Muslim, European, Christian, Sikh and General. There was also an attempt made to separate the Scheduled Castes from the rest of the Hindus but this was resolutely opposed by Gandhi. A settlement was reached with the Poona Pact by which the Scheduled castes were given an agreed number of seats in the legislatures from among the seats meant for the Hindus in general. The third conference discussed the problem of federation of the British Indian provinces and the Indian states and the culmination of these activities came in the Government of India Act of 1935.

The Act concerned itself mainly with two points one of which was the federation of India and the other the extent of the devolution of authority in the federal and provincial governments. The federal part never became operative as the princes refused to join the federation because of their fear of loss of political power and privileges. The Act divided the subjects of legislation into three distinct categories called the federal, provincial and concurrent lists. Important subjects like defence and external relations were to be administered by the executive members while other subjects were transferred to the popularly elected ministers. A few of the restrictions over the legislative procedures were removed but real power still vested in the executive. The Congress expressed its reaction to the Act in the following words. It considered the Act "designed to facilitate and perpetuate the domination of the people of India and...imposed on the country to the accompaniment of widespread repression and the suppression of civil liberties", and reiterated its "rejection of the new constitution in its entirety". On receiving assurances that the powers of the executive would be used judiciously and constitutionally the Congress fought the elections under the Act and constituted its own party ministries in seven provinces. These ministries functioned efficiently but quit office when the War was declared in 1939. The Congress withdrew its ministries as a mark of protest against the way in which India was declared at war without even a pretence of consultation with the political parties in the country.

IV

With its return to the wilderness in 1939-40 Indian nationalism entered the final phase of its struggle against imperialism. It had made its stand against Nazism and Fascism clear even when these were distant threats. Thus when Italy invaded Abyssinia and German and Italian dictators began annexing territories or when Japan invaded China the Congress leaders had condemned their actions in no uncertain terms. The Congress had recognized the menace of totalitarianism when it was considered to be quite respectable in the Western world and

argued that Nazi Germany could not be successfully opposed by a nation itself in bondage. As a first step in the fight for freedom, the Congress argued, the Indian nation must be freed. The British government argued that it was hardly the time to discuss constitutional problems involving relationships between Britain and India when the future of freedom itself was at stake. Some vague assurances about a settlement after the War were given but these failed to satisfy Indian nationalism. In 1942 the Congress passed its famous "Quit India" resolution calling for an immediate withdrawal of British power from India. This was answered with widespread arrests and repression which in their turn provoked a mass revolt. Between the time of the Cripps Mission in 1942 and the termination of hostilities, an undeclared war existed between the British administration in India and Indian nationalism. The denouement came in 1946 when the Labour Party won the election in Britain and formed its government. It sent a cabinet mission to solve the Indian problem and its scheme was announced in May 1946. In September 1946 an interim government was formed, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, but the working of this government was rendered almost impossible as the Congress and the Muslim League, the constituents of the government, were working at cross-purposes. The Muslim League was demanding nothing less than the partition of India and the formation of a separate state of Pakistan out of the predominantly Muslim areas of India. The partition scheme was reluctantly accepted by the Congress and carried out in 1947. Thus, in August 1947 the two independent states of India and Pakistan came into existence and India opened a new chapter in her long history.

The new state of Pakistan was formed out of the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and parts of the Punjab in the west and parts of Bengal in the east. It had thus two wings separated from each other by a thousand miles of Indian territory. There was little that was common between the western and eastern wings except religion. The western part was predominantly Urdu-speaking while the eastern part was predominantly Bengali-speaking.

Thus ended some two centuries of British domination in India. Never before, in the history of humanity, was a transfer

of sovereignty from one power to another brought about so peacefully. The credit for this must go as much to the British nation as to Indian nationalism. The Indian revolution was unique for it was a revolution by consent both of the rulers and the ruled. As a recognition of this, as it were, was the appointment of Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of British India, as the first Governor-General of free India. Lord Mountbatten came to liquidate the British Empire in India and remained to be the first truly constitutional head of a free India.

India had been free of foreign domination and the Indian people had emerged on the stage of world history as a new nation. It was believed that with the partition of the country the relations between the two new states would be friendly and happy. But this was not to be as several factors embittered them. First, there was the mass uprooting of millions of people from one country to another. In the communal frenzy that gripped the country in 1946 and 1947 millions of refugees trekked their way to one or the other dominion. India had to receive millions of Hindus and Sikhs who migrated from the western wing of Pakistan. A similar exodus from the eastern part of Pakistan also began and is still continuing even after ten years of the partition. The problem of rehabilitation of these unfortunate millions was a staggering one and taxed the resources of the new nation to a dangerous point. The problem of evacuee property—property left behind by the Hindus and Sikhs in western and eastern Pakistan — has bedevilled the relations between the two countries, and until this problem is satisfactorily solved there can be no lasting amity between them.

The other great problem which confronted the new Government of India was that of the Indian states. At the time of the partition of the country there were some 600 large and small states in India and Pakistan. They had diverse kinds of relationships with the paramount power and these relationships ceased on the lapse of British paramountcy. The British pronouncements at the time of the transfer of power had advised the Indian princes duly to consider the compulsions of geography and politics and accede to the dominion with whom they were closely linked by geography. India had found

in the late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950) a remarkable leader who had the confidence of the princes as well as the loyalty of the people of their states. An instrument of accession, requiring the Indian states to hand over vital subjects like communications, defence and external relations to the new government in New Delhi, was worked out. With goodwill on all sides the problem of the states was solved peacefully when almost all the states, large and small, signed the instrument of accession. The skill with which the problem was solved showed a very high order of statesmanship on the part of Sardar Patel and a sense of patriotism on the part of the princes. The exceptions to this peaceful process of integration were the states of Junagadh and Hyderabad. Junagadh is situated in Saurashtra and had a Nawab as its ruler. The state's position was such that it could integrate itself only with India but the Nawab, under external pressure, declared the state's accession to Pakistan whereupon there was widespread resentment amongst his people. A popular movement for integration with India so unnerved the Nawab that he fled the state and sought asylum in Pakistan. A provisional government was set up and this requested the Government of India to take over the administration of the state.

In Hyderabad ruled the Nizam. Hyderabad was the most important Indian state located in the heart of India, occupying a strategic position between the north and the south. In the state a small minority of political adventurers and fanatics had put pressure on the Nizam to toy with the idea of setting up his state as an independent kingdom. Numerous atrocities against the nationalist population were committed and progressively the state was being delivered to anarchy. The States Ministry of the Government of India, headed by Sardar Patel, tried patient and long negotiations but the ruling minority in the state remained intransigent. Finally the Government of India was compelled to resort to a "police action" in September 1948 and within a few days the state acceded to India.

Kashmir posed a problem of a different magnitude. The state had entered into a "stand-still" agreement with the two dominions of India and Pakistan as it wanted time to consider

the problem of its accession. The state has an area of 84,471 sq. miles and borders on India, Pakistan, China and the Soviet Union. Pakistan was virtually interested in forcing the Maharaja to accede to it and committed breaches of the stand-still agreement by obstructing the flow of civil supplies to the state. This was followed by a large scale invasion of the state by members of the north-western frontier tribes aided by the Pakistani army and led by prominent officers of that army who ostensibly were "on leave". In October 1947 the situation became very critical for the raiders had looted, and burnt their way to Srinagar, the capital. The Maharaja then appealed to India for military assistance and signed the instrument of accession whereupon Indian troops were flown to Kashmir to fight back the invaders. The Maharaja was supported in his action by the political leaders of Kashmir and the Indian Government had expressed its desire to let the people of Kashmir ratify the accession of their state to India through a plebiscite after the state was cleared of all invaders and peace restored to it. On the 31st of December, 1947, India lodged a complaint with the Security Council of the United Nations charging Pakistan with aggression against Kashmir which was a part of the territory of the dominion of India by virtue of its accession. Efforts were made at mediation and in January 1949 a cease-fire was agreed upon. The problem dragged on in interminable discussions and several United Nations commissions attempted to uncover the facts of the case and suggest a solution. The issue is still unsolved though in the interval the constituent assembly of Kashmir has expressed its decision that the state's accession to India is irrevocable. Pakistan has been supporting its puppet government of the so-called Azad or "Free" Kashmir and its troops still occupy nearly a third part of the state's territory.

The next problem was that of the drafting of a Constitution for the country. For this purpose a committee headed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the then Law Member and an outstanding leader of the untouchables, was appointed and it presented its draft to the Constituent Assembly in 1949. This draft was debated and the Constitution was adopted in 1950. It has 22 parts and enjoys the distinction of being the longest

written constitution in the world. It prescribes a federal structure called the Union of India which is a republic. At the federal level is the Union legislature divided into two houses, the House of the People (Lok Sabha) and the Council of States (Rajya Sabha). The Union parliament has some 500 members. The members of the House of the People are directly elected while the members of the Council of States are elected by an electoral college comprising the elected members of the legislative bodies of the states. The Union executive consists of a President and a Vice-President elected by the members of Parliament and the State legislatures and a council of ministers who are members of the Parliament. The constituent units of the Union were divided into four categories of states. The first category called the A class states comprised the old provinces of Bombay, West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Madras, Madhya Pradesh, East Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh. The B class states represented unions of many of the former princely states and other large entities. The B class states were Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Bharat, Mysore, Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU), Rajasthan, Saurashtra and Travancore-Cochin while the C class states were Ajmer, Bhopal, Bilaspur, Coorg, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Kutch, Manipur, Tripura, and Vindhya Pradesh. Finally came the D class comprising the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The organization of the states followed, more or less, the lines laid down in the Government of India Act of 1935. In the A class states there were the governors and the cabinet of ministers selected from among the elected members of the legislative assemblies. In the B class states the place of the governors was taken by Rajpramukhs who were scions of the princely families whose states were merged with others to form larger unions. All these distinctions are now purely of historical and academic interest as the entire structure has been changed with the creation of linguistic states. A reference to this will be made later.

The list of legislative subjects is divided into three categories, namely, union, state and concurrent. The Union Parliament is responsible for legislation on nationally important subjects like external affairs, defence, communications, economic plan-

ning and inter-state relations and excise while the states are expected to concentrate their attention on matters of purely regional interest. In 1952 the first election under the new Constitution was held and it became the greatest experiment in democratic practice in the history of the world. The Congress party led by Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru emerged as the largest single party and formed governments in the federal capital and the states. In opposition to it were the Socialist and Communist groups and minor parties like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Jan Sangh.

India had achieved nationhood but there were some factors which had the power to challenge this new status. This was particularly so in the case of the problem of the creation of states based on language groups. The Constitution of India had recognized Hindi and 13 other languages as the official languages in the various states and territories. These were Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Of these Sanskrit and Urdu had few agitational possibilities, the former being a classical language and the latter being used by large but scattered sections of population in northern India. The people speaking Assamese, Bengali, Oriya or Punjabi had their own states. Marathi was distributed among people who lived in Bombay, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad. The Kannada-speaking people were divided in Mysore, Hyderabad, Bombay and the Andhras in Madras and Hyderabad. Some thirty-years ago the Indian National Congress had accepted the principle of a redrawing of the map of India on the basis of language groups and naturally after the transfer of power the agitation for the creation of linguistic states gathered momentum. It came to a head in the state of Madras where the Telugu-speaking people carried on a sustained agitation for the formation of the state of Andhra comprising all the areas where they predominated. The new state of Andhra was created in October 1953 as a direct result of this agitation. But the Andhras were not the only group to demand a separate state of their own though they were by far the most articulate and assertive. As the demand for language-states was assuming a militant form a States

Reorganization Commission was appointed by the Government of India on the 29th of December, 1953.

The agitation for linguistic states posed an intricate problem to the national leadership. As the Commission's Report submitted in 1955 pointed out at the very outset : "The existing structure of the States of the Indian Union is partly the result of accident and the circumstances attending the growth of the British power in India and partly a by-product of the historic process of the integration of former Indian States. The division of India during the British period into British provinces and Indian States was itself fortuitous and had no basis in Indian history. It was a mere accident that, as a result of the abandonment, after the upheaval of 1857, of the objective of extending the British dominion by absorbing princely territories, the surviving States escaped annexation. The map of the territories annexed and directly administered by the British was also not shaped by any rational or scientific planning but by 'the military, political or administrative exigencies or conveniences of the moment'." As far back as 1920 the Indian National Congress had accepted the principle of the redistribution of the states on a language basis and had developed its own organization on the basis of this principle. It is not necessary for our purpose here to go into the details of the history of the language movement and its impact on the policy of the Congress. The Dar Commission (1948) and the Jawaharlal-Vallabhbhai-Pattabhi Sitaramayya Report were different stages of the single process of the modification of the official Congress views. The Andhra agitation had forced the pace of the linguistic movement and had thrown into a sharp relief the dangers inherent in further shelving the question which involved so much passion and emotion in large areas of the country. The Commission was required to make a thorough study of the entire problem in the context of the administrative and economic life of the country as a whole and make suitable recommendations on which Parliament may finally act. The Commission consisting of three eminent Indians — Sayid Fazl Ali, then Governor of Orissa, Dr. Hriday Nath Kunzru, a member of the Council of States, and Sardar K. M. Panikkar, then Indian ambassador

to Egypt—travelled all over the country and considered 1,52,250 different documents presented by persons and organizations scattered all over the country and submitted its report in 1955. The Commission undoubtedly attached due importance to the role of language but felt that the demands of national unity and security must be squarely met if any scheme of the reorganization of the states of India is to be rational, beneficial and successful. The Report recommended the formation of 16 states and 3 federally administered territories. These states were Madras, Kerala, Karnataka, Hyderabad, Andhra, Bombay, Vidarbha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam and Jammu and Kashmir. The territories to be federally administered were named as Delhi, Manipur and the Andaman and Nicobar islands. The Report had run counter to expectations in Andhra (where the inclusion of the Telugu-speaking areas of the Hyderabad State was demanded) and Maharashtra. Some of these recommendations came as a surprise to the leaders of the Congress Party itself as was freely admitted by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In the areas affected by the recommendations of the Commission a movement was afoot to reverse such portions of the Report as were not in consonance with the public demand and the Congress Party was also beset with grave differences of opinion threatening splits within its ranks. Never before, in its 60-year-old history, had the Congress been confronted with such a difficult problem and for some time a furious discussion went on in the higher councils of the Party. The other political parties were also caught in difficult situations. The Praja Socialist Party gave its qualified support to the creation of linguistic states while the Communist Party of India commended states with wide powers based on the pattern of the idea of the Soviet nationalities. Finally the Congress Party decided to modify some of the recommendations of the Report before presenting it as a bill to the Parliament. It recognized the need for the creation of a separate state of Maharashtra which would include Vidarbha—the Marathi-speaking part of Madhya Pradesh—and also the creation of Mahagujarat comprising the Gujarati-speaking areas of the Bombay State, Saurashtra and Kutch while Bombay city would form a

centrally administered unit for some years. The disintegration of Hyderabad was recommended so that the different linguistic areas in the State could be merged in Andhra, Karnataka and Maharashtra. The decision about Bombay city provoked widespread discontent among the Marathi-speaking people and in some places this culminated in violent disturbances. Finally in September 1956 a bill was presented to Parliament whereby it was sought to maintain the present status of the State of Bombay with the addition of Saurashtra, Kutch, Marathawada (Marathi-speaking areas of the Hyderabad State) and Vidarbha. The capital of this bi-lingual state would be the city of Bombay. The bill, after some behind-the-scene parleys among political leaders and heated discussion in the House, was passed and on November 1 the new map of India came into existence. Earlier in September the changed decision on Bombay provoked resentment in Gujarat and led to equally violent disturbances in Ahmedabad and other towns of Gujarat. The new map of India as it emerged comprised 14 states and six federally administered units. These states are Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Andhra, Madras, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, and Jammu and Kashmir. Manipur, Tripura, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, the Andaman and Nicobar islands, and the Laccadive and Maldive islands are the federally administered units.

The agitation for linguistic provinces brought into the open some problems which seem to be peculiar to nationalism developing in a continental area like India with a variety of regional-linguistic cultures fused into a national political mould but recently. As pointed out earlier India has some 14 major languages and hundreds of dialects. Though the country was bound by a strong cultural unity the periods of its political unity were invariably interspersed by fragmentation into units, each unit living its separate existence. The British empire had imposed on India an administrative unity served by modern means of communications, a generally uniform code of laws and legal procedure, a highly organized civil service which was national in its extension though not in its spirit and a system of Western education whose products had a family resemblance in their thoughts and attitudes. Before the establishment of

the British empire India existed, for long periods of time, as a multi-state country. It was only during the time of the Mauryas (324-187 B.C.) that the major parts of the country were unified into an integrated administration. The Gupta empire (319-550 A.D.), the other large empire of antiquity, did not have the southern parts of the country directly under its administration. The early Muslim sultans like Alauddin Khilji (1296-1326) extended their sway into the south from time to time but such imperial rule had little of permanence. In the time of the Mughals Akbar (1556-1605) consolidated his hold over northern India but south India remained out of his grasp. Aurangzeb (1658-1707) extinguished the independence of the Sultanates of the Deccan but failed to conquer the Marathas. The Marathas themselves came very near to being an imperial power but the third Battle of Panipat (1761) put an end to their dreams. It was only after 1857 that the whole of India had been brought under one administrative and political system. But if the British rule in India profoundly disturbed the existing intellectual, social and economic patterns of living it failed to transform completely the configuration of regional cultures in the country. Under the impact of British rule nationalism developed as an answer to the Western challenge but this remained more or less political, leaving almost intact the patterns of regional cultures identified with specific languages. As the States Reorganization Commission's Report observes : "One of the major facts of India's political evolution during the last hundred years has been the growth of our regional languages. They have during this period developed into rich and powerful vehicles of expression creating a sense of unity among the people speaking them." Parallelly, therefore, during the last hundred years or so, there were two tendencies at work. One was that of the emergence of nationalism fostering sentiments of national unity in response to alien domination. The other was the development of the regional languages and literatures and woven around them the web of regional cultures. As the Report cited above points out, "It has to be remembered that linguistic and other group loyalties have deep roots in the soil and history of India. The culture-based regionalism, centring round the idea of lin-

guistic homogeneity represents to the average Indian values easily intelligible to him. Indian nationalism, on the other hand, has still to develop into a positive concept. It must acquire a deeper content before it becomes ideologically adequate to withstand the gravitational pull of the traditional narrower loyalties." Indeed, the traditional narrower loyalties form progressively extensive concentric circles and may be divided into clan, caste, religion, region, and the outermost circle is that of the nation in the normal thinking of the average Indian. The linguistic agitation was the most serious challenge to Indian nationalism and through this ordeal this nationalism has emerged triumphant though somewhat chastened by its harrowing experiences. It is pertinent here to remark that even in the most violent moods of this agitation the idea of the nation was seldom forgotten and disloyalty to the nation, even by implication, was not in evidence. However, the task of Indian nationalism has just begun after the achievement of independence and the extent to which it will become a unifying and sustaining force will largely depend on its social and economic content.

The Constitution of the Union of India lays down certain fundamental rights of the citizens such as free speech and assembly, worship, equality, property, education and constitutional remedies. Untouchability, the scourge of the ages, has been declared to have been abolished and legislation in the federal parliament and the state legislatures has prescribed penalties for the practice of untouchability. This does not mean, however, that the problem is solved. It would be futile to deny that untouchability in open or veiled forms may exist in some areas of the country for some years to come. What has happened is that what was considered through the ages as legitimate has now become illegal and its practice entails punishment. Untouchability is but a highly diseased and extreme manifestation of the rule of the castes and so long as the caste system lives untouchability, in however mild a form, will exist. While the caste system has been weakening in the large urban-industrial centres its stranglehold over the rural areas appears to be still intact and it is here that nationalism will face another challenge. Political democracy can only become

real if it is enforced by social and economic equality of status and opportunity.

The creation of the equality of social and economic opportunities is another difficult problem facing the new Indian nation. The leaders of the country have attempted to answer the compulsions of this problem through the two Five Year Plans. The First Five Year Plan went into operation in 1951 and was completed early in 1956. It was primarily aimed at the reconstruction of Indian agriculture and creation of the basis for accelerated industrialization of the country. The Second Plan, the drafting of which has been influenced by the resolution passed by the annual convention of the Congress Party held at Avadi near Madras, aims at helping the evolution of the nation along socialist lines. Its main emphasis is on the rapid development of basic industries which will eventually create more employment opportunities, a more equitable distribution of the national wealth and all-round cultural growth based upon a rising standard of living. India has definitely taken its first steps on the long road to the attainment of an equalitarian and prosperous social order.

A remarkable change has come over India in less than a hundred years. In 1858 India was crushed and prostrate. Political despondency and cultural stagnation ruled supreme over the minds of men. Feudalism had been neutralized as a political force but not destroyed. The commercial revolution that had been sweeping the land was slowly transforming the shape of Indian life. The impact of the West had created a profound disturbance and new minds were coming to life from under the debris of centuries-old attitudes and ideas. The railway, as much as the University, stood as the symbol of the modern age in India whose *elan vital* was to be found in nationalism. The railways, the civil service, the new legal system, all these were introduced by the British albeit not out of purely humanitarian reasons. These ushered the twentieth century in India. But having introduced the modern age the British were powerless to determine the distinct form it would assume in India. That was the task of history of which they themselves were in part creatures.

The awakening of India was a part of that gigantic process

which was stirring the minds of millions from Tokyo to Istanbul. Nationalism had seized the masses and the common man strode upon the stage of history. The recognition of this fact forms the Preamble to the Indian Constitution which is adopted in the name of the Indian people. The age of Princes and Nawabs, their eminences and majesties, has been left behind and the common Indian, who for centuries has been a passive spectator of history has now taken upon himself the task of fashioning his own destiny. The road before him is clear though the first few steps he takes might appear confused. But as the revolution he has gone through has been, by and large, a peaceful one, his temper is one of peace. If he is fascinated by the whirr of giant machines his conscience is still preserved in the wisdom of that long line of the makers of his culture the most recent of whom was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. For him the most appealing slogan is that of the dignity of man working and living in freedom. The West has entered his life and has awakened him out of the slumber of his immediate past. And having taken the measure of the West he is determined to go his own way which is neither entirely of the West nor of his own East.

The emergence of Modern India is an event of great significance in the history of the world. With it India has turned over a new leaf in her history vibrant with hope and confident of those very values which she has discovered anew but which have entered the warp and woof of her life and history. This new India is still in the making but there is little doubt about the form she will eventually take, the thoughts she will think and the dreams she will dream. An ancient people has found a new nationhood and in the making of this East has met West, sometimes in conflict but often in co-operation. The synthesis of the East and the West that is modern India has enduring qualities and now that the era of conflict is over the age of creation will soon begin.

Part Two

IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS

CHAPTER NINE

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

I

IN THE EARLIER PAGES an attempt was made at delineating those events which have been of significance in the historical evolution of the Indian nation. From prehistory to the yester-year is a mighty stretch of time for the span covers some six millennia and a historical chronicle of such a vast spectrum can become intelligible only if it attempts to present the total picture in terms of certain dominant personalities and the circumstances that made them. But mere events are but one aspect of the total historical reality, for their importance can only be properly assessed through the ideas and institutions which form their inner core. In this part of the work, therefore, an attempt will be made to describe such of the ideas and institutions as have gone into the making of the Indian nation. And of these ideas and institutions those associated with the state are of primary importance as the state is the key-stone of the mighty arch of organized life.

The history of Indian polity is littered with the debris of diverse experiments in organizing and taming political force in the cause of serving humanity. Tribal republicanism, monarchy, imperial polity and village democracy are some of the forms of political organization that have been tried in the past. In all these, princes and potentates, sultans and generals, shopkeepers and farmers have played their roles. During the last half century the masses have risen to a new historical consciousness. The recognition of this fact is enshrined in the Preamble to the Indian Constitution. The first general election in 1952 saw the largest participation of millions in a process

of creating a government. A republican democracy is the newest form of government that India has been trying over the last eight years. Will it succeed? And if it does what precise form will it assume eventually? These are some of the questions that arise in many troubled minds. A part of this answer can be drawn from the past historical experience which has gone into the making of the Indian mind—if such an Indian mind exists at all. To the delineation of this historical experience in government we shall now turn.

II

When the state emerges in full historical view it is already a highly developed monarchy. The organs of popular opinion like the *sabha* and the *samiti*—popular assemblies of the Vedic days—exist only as a memory of the past or in a much modified version. They are divested of all political power and are transformed into gatherings of learned men assembled to receive patronage from the royal authority. This royal authority is hereditary, though memories of an elective kingship are preserved in some aspects of the ritual of coronation. The state is described as the very antithesis of anarchy and the king is looked upon as the benevolent protector of the people who must regard his subjects with the same affection as a father would his children. A republican form of government of the oligarchic type was no doubt in existence in ancient days from time to time. The ancient texts mention names of such *samghas* and *ganas*—tribal republics—in the north-west and north-east as existing from about the seventh century B.C. up to the third century B.C. and then from the first century B.C. until the fourth century A.D. These republics were governed by tribal assemblies which elected the executive answerable to them. The tribal assemblies comprised the ruling class and there were property qualifications for membership. But these republics were small in size and their impact on the formation of the ancient Indian state was only of peripheral significance. The typical ancient Indian state was paternalist in its orientation, its specific function being to ensure that right was might and that the law of the jungle did not become

the law of the land. For this purpose it was endowed with the power of coercion—*danda*—by God, for only through force, it was argued, could the state institutionalize justice (*dharma*). The ideals of the state were prescribed as *dharma* (justice), *artha* (economic well-being) and *kama* (biological and cultural fulfilment). Theoretically the activities of the state were declared to be total in their scope. Everything, ranging from the temple to the gallows, was within the purview and jurisdiction of the state. The king was the mighty symbol of this state and there was an aura of divinity surrounding his high office.

If in theory the ancient Indian king was an absolute monarch in practice he had to submit himself to several checks on his royal prerogatives. Though always looked upon as the mighty instrument of the rule of law the king had limited authority over the making of that law itself. Among the sources of law the sacred scriptures, the law codes and local customs and traditions may be mentioned as the most important. The king had no authority to change any of these. It is true that from time to time he could issue ordinances, but these could be valid only for stated periods and had to be in consonance with the spirit of the sacred law itself. This restriction proved a powerful check on royal authority.

Secondly, we must also consider the role of the many intermediaries who stood between the king and his subjects. First came the council of ministers. They were appointed by the king and held office during his pleasure. But the smooth working of the administration depended to a very large extent on the wise selection of the ministers. Generally such persons as were respected by the people for their integrity, intelligence and courage were appointed to the office of ministers. The ministers had to be the link between the king and the people in interpreting the popular wishes to the king and explaining the royal decrees to the people. Of course examples could be cited of worthless ministers appointed to their high office by capricious kings but these were exceptions rather than the rule.

Then there came the complex of institutions in which the life of the people was woven. These were the occupational guilds, the castes, religious groups and regional societies. The

guilds played a powerful role in the economic life of the country and their importance was duly recognized by the state. The headman of the guild was a member of the court and the kings were chary of interfering with the accepted patterns of control and organizational working of these guilds ; many of them, at least in the early period, represented large concentrations of economic power. And by about the second century B.C. the caste system had developed almost all those features which distinguished it from other forms of social organization in the world. Many of the castes had councils of their own and with the authority of these councils the kings seldom interfered. Indeed, the power of the state reinforced the authority of the castes for the concept of the *dharma* was always interpreted in practice as the law of *varna* (castes) and *ashrama* (stages of life). The caste controlled almost the whole life of man ; told him what and with whom he could eat and drink, what occupations were legitimate for him and whom he could marry. Over all these written and unwritten laws, usages and conventions of social and personal behaviour, the king had little control.

If the caste system created a hierarchy of status groups the peculiar political conditions of the times led to the growth of similar hierarchies of political power. Even under the most centralized state like that of the Mauryas the primitive means of communications, serving the continental land-mass of India, made the existence of devolution of authority and decentralization of power imperative. The regional society, as a distinct constituent unit of the larger national (in the sense of a cultural) society, characterized by differences in language and immediate political organization, has always been a feature of India through the ages. In the past, therefore, at least in practice if not in theory, the national state in India had always to be a confederation of power and hierarchies of power and these circles of power stood between the individual and the state.

The smallest of such regional societies was the village community. It was a council of village elders which ensured the smooth working of village life. It enjoyed a real degree of autonomy and in the south the village community became a

great multi-functional force. The village councils looked after parks and gardens, maintained roads and tanks, fixed the prices and quality of gold and also performed some banking functions. For this purpose the state gave it the right to impose some form of levy or tax on the people and in later times the village headman became the most important representative of the state on the local level.

All these associations claimed a share of the individual's loyalty. They provided for him a link with the state and very often shielded him from its rapacity. Tradition and circumstance had moulded their forms. The state had to respect that tradition though it could organize the circumstances under which it worked. The individual, in his turn, could rebel against tradition only at his own peril, for the laws of social ostracism and excommunication made an individual, against whom they were invoked, defenceless and eventually pliant to the social will.

The state in ancient India functioned in a society which was hierarchical in its ordering and authority. This hierarchy was determined by the rules of the caste system. The Brahmin occupied the summit of this social pyramid the basis of which was formed by the Shudra. The laws inspired by caste could rarely have that spirit of equity and justice which is interpreted as forming its majesty. The old codes like that of Manu, through their clauses dealing with the Shudra, represent institutionalized injustice as perpetrated against a numerous section of the Indian population. For the Shudra life was a paradigm of duties but never a charter of rights for he had none. If the ancient texts are to be believed the Shudra was the servant of another, to be dispossessed and slain at will. He was declared to be too unclean to acquire the religious lore and savage penalties were prescribed for punishing a Shudra who dared learn the *Vedas*. In fact there was one law for the higher castes and another for the Shudras. And the state had to administer this law. It was only in exceptional cases like that of the Buddhist emperor Ashoka that an insistence on *dandasamata* (equality in punishment) and *vyavaharasamata* (equality in procedure and conduct) could be possible. Hence, if the plurality of associations cushioned the impact of the absolutist state on the individual,

the codes of laws, based as they were on the unquestioned acceptance of the hierarchical caste system, denied equality to large segments of the population. But it should also be pointed out here that similar injustices obtained almost everywhere in the contemporary world. Through the centuries, it appears, there has been one law for the freeman and another for the slave, one for the patrician and another for the plebian, one for the yeoman and another for the serf, and the equality of human beings in the eyes of the law is but a recent practice in the history of mankind.

Of the system of administration the one laid down in the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya was almost archetypal. The kingdom comprised seven constituents or limbs as they were called. These were the king, the ministry, territory, treasury, forts, army and allies. The empire was divided into several provinces over which ruled the viceroys who were often members of the royal house. The provinces were divided into districts administered by the district officers and the village was the smallest unit of administration. The provinces were given a large degree of autonomy which would be unthinkable in an empire of modern times like the British Indian empire. Over the central administration presided the emperor assisted by the council of ministers. The actual administration in the matter of implementation of the royal decisions was the responsibility of a vast army of officials, inspectors, revenue-collectors, treasurers, accountants and reporters. The emperor was kept constantly informed of all significant happenings in his domains by a host of reporters and spies. In spite of many regulations and taxes the administration, according to Megasthenes, the Greek envoy to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, was not oppressive and the people enjoyed a measure of security, peace and prosperity which was to be their most precious memory in times to come.

III

The Islamic invasions created a revolutionary situation in Indian life. The early crusaders of Islam were invaders who hoped to find in the country a rich field for pillage and teem-

ing millions who could be won for the faith. The Arab conquest of Sind, the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni and the invasions of Muhammad Ghori ruffled the surface of Indian life but failed to disturb it profoundly. It was only with the establishment of the Sultanate at Delhi in 1206 that the Muslim state in India came to be properly set up. The early Muslim sultans aimed at setting up a type of Muslim state known to them in the then Islamic world. This state was theoretically a theocracy, an empire of the faithful, drawing its legal strength from the fundamental principles of law — the Shariah — as laid down by the Holy Book, *Koran*. In actual practice, however, this early state was neither an Islamic state "even in the limited sense in which this word is used for other mediaeval Muslim states. Nor was it a national state of the Muslims" (see Abid Husain, *The National Culture of India*, 1956, p. 53). This state created a primary antagonism between the rulers and the ruled on the grounds of differences in religion. Theoretically, at least, and often in practice also, the Hindu could scarcely expect to be treated on a level with the Muslim in the eyes of the law. The unbeliever existed on sufferance and suffered many well-known penalties, the best known of which was the *Jezia* or the poll tax. The Sultan was an absolute autocrat, the fount of all power, the commander of the faithful and the liege lord of the nobility. Surrounded by a sullen population this state existed on warfare, continuous and predatory, and this brought into being a parasitic class of nobles who had little share in the really productive tasks. The fanaticism of the early conquerors led to numerous acts of wanton cruelty and destruction and these acts built a wall of bitterness and prejudice between the masses and the rulers. In course of time, however, the Muslim state in India became considerably modified in its form as it had to reconcile itself with the facts of geography and the need for employing those numerous administrators whose talents had to be used in the task of administration.

By the time the Mughals came on the scene the character of the Muslim state itself had undergone a profound change even in the homelands of Islam. Babar and Humayun had little time or opportunity to set up a secure system of govern-

ment in the territories conquered by them. Babar admits that his system was more *Saifi* (military) than *Qualmi* (by pen). However, a number of rulers before them had created a tradition of public welfare and in this Sher Shah Sur, the Afghan ruler who ousted Humayun, had brilliant success. With Akbar a new era in the history of Indian polity begins. His policy towards the Hindus became a turning point in Mughal polity for it tended to eliminate the primary antagonism which had always beset a Muslim state ruling over a population the majority of whom were not Muslims. His administration bore the imprint of his vigorous and enlightened personality. Akbar understood well the force in the dictum that nothing succeeds like moderation as much in personal conduct as in the affairs of the state. The emperor remained the supreme authority but his personal character and wisdom became the most effective checks on the very absolutism inherent in his station and circumstances.

The first significant change was the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. Akbar's policy of *sulh-i-kul* — universal toleration — brought about a compact between the Mughals and the most determined enemies of the Muslim rule, the Rajputs. It secured for the empire valuable services of brilliant commanders and administrators like Raja Man Singh and Todar Mal. This compact, as it became more extensive, created conditions of harmony and progress. The conflict was no longer between the religious interests of the rulers and the ruled but between the political and economic interests of the imperial state and the provincial rulers. Though war was not eliminated — it could scarcely be — it operated on an entirely different plane. The state was no longer, even in theory, a proselytizing institution and it gave the subjects a sense of security as for them there was no loss of political rights because of their religious beliefs. Abul Fazl, Akbar's court-chronicler, describes the prevailing ideal of kingship in the following words : " They call him king who surpasses his followers, and who, by his wisdom, is acquainted with the temperament of the world, and regulates his actions by the state thereof. Out of the abundance of his patience he doth not depart from his station at the sight of any impropriety ; neither is he discourag-

ed at an inconsiderate rebellion. By his liberality the hearts of the high and the low obtain their desires; so that the needy never wait in painful expectation. He is perfectly resigned to the will of God; being confident of the equity of the divine dispensations. He is not dejected in adversity; and in prosperity he doth not neglect to return thanks unto God. He putteth the reins of desire into the hands of reason, and will not lose himself in seeking after what is improper. He keepeth his anger under the subjection of wisdom, to the end that blind rage may not get the upper hand, nor inconsiderateness carry aught beyond its limits. He seateth himself on the eminence of humanity, that those who have swerved from duty may have a way left to return without being exposed to indignity; and in his behaviour there is such condescension, that the petitioner seems to be judge, and himself the suitor for justice. He considers the happiness of his people as the best means of pleasing the creator; but he never seeks to please the people in contradiction to reason. He is ever searching after those who speak truth and is not displeased with words that are bitter in appearance but sweet in effect. He considers the nature of the speech and the rank of the speaker. He is not contented in that solely himself doth not commit violence, but he sees that no injustice is committed within his realm. He is continually attentive to the health of the body politic, and applies remedies to the several diseases thereof."

Here we have perhaps an idealized picture. In its import it is reminiscent of similar sentiments in the ancient Hindu books. The qualities that are held up for emulation are those of tolerance, reason, justice and strength. Under Akbar's care the exotic plant of Persian administration planted by the Mughals in the Indian soil became acclimatized and assimilated into its environment. With Akbar began the national monarchy in India. For the large masses of the people its significance lay in the fact that they could be ruled by their own laws without undue interference from the state. This state was benevolent in its intentions though autocratic in its powers but here we must remember what Bluntschili has to say. The modern state, he points out, dates back only to 1740 : (*The State*, Book I, p. 55). And the authority of the Indian state

was, as it is pointed out, "hedged around by checks which are not always visible to the modern historian, and controlled by latent forces of custom, habit and public opinion, to which the most despotic princes and governors are occasionally compelled to bow" (Wheeler, *A Short History of India*, p. 183).

The trend initiated by Akbar came to be reversed by Aurangzeb. The policy of toleration was replaced by one of fanaticism and the nemesis was not long in coming. From the ravages wrought by Aurangzeb rose the national states of the Marathas and the Sikhs. The great Shivaji drew upon the ideals of ancient India in devising an administration for his kingdom. But after his death the Maratha state developed certain characteristics which indicated a departure from the aims laid down by him. The government of the Nizam and the Nawabs were, with slight modifications, patterned on the model of the Mughal state and were constantly caught in the maelstrom of curruption, pillage, inefficiency and weakness.

The rapidity with which the British made their conquests indicates the extent to which the divergence between the rulers and the ruled had gone in the opening decades of the 19th century. The governments ruling over different parts of the country increasingly proved themselves to be incompetent to deal with the situation, military and political. The people at large felt that there were few ties that bound them to their respective states. The Marathas and the Sikhs were, to a certain degree, an exception to this for both the peoples were united by close ties of religion and culture to a large extent. As for the rest of India the rule of rapine and revenge that went by the name of government made the people feel indifferent to the fate of the governments concerned. While all of these indigenous powers were able to wage war in furtherance of their separate interests none of them was capable of giving the country an effective system of government which could unite the people in a total resistance to foreign conquest. In such a divided and mutually antagonistic world of principalities, *jagirs* and states, entered the British with the results that have already been described in an earlier chapter.

In conclusion, we should notice a few peculiar features of the governmental system of India before the advent of the

Western powers. In the first instance government had an intensely personal character inasmuch as it was invariably construed as a rule of persons rather than principles and laws. The king was the state in practice if not in theory. There were the principles and laws, many of them as lofty as could be found anywhere else, but with these the common man did not have a constant acquaintance. Secondly, the laws themselves did not derive from the people but rested for their authority on some divine sanction or some hoary authority like tradition and custom. And law being thus based on religious authority there were bound to be as many systems of law as there were religions represented in the country. Then, in spite of the government being understood in narrow personal terms it was considered to be most desirable when it was remote and left the other organs of power like the regional society and the caste council ample scope for the exercise of their specific authority. A good government was one that gathered taxes, which were not too many or too heavy, maintained an army to protect the people against aggression and gave the people a sense of security and justice. The real government for the people in their everyday lives was not the national or even the regional state but the village community. And as Sir Charles Napier observed: "The village communities are little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves and almost independent of foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution, ... but the village communities remain the same." But if the village communities gave security and continuity to the life of the average person they also created conditions of isolation and stagnation. National life, therefore, became fragmented into myriads of such "little republics" living their lives undisturbed by the waves of revolution sweeping the country. In the changed circumstances these "conservative, unchanging and autarchic" village communities became vulnerable to the depradations of economic and political exploitation which came in the wake of foreign conquest.

IV

The rise of the British-Indian state was an event of revolutionary significance. From 1765 to 1833 the British administration experimented with different forms of government in the territories conquered from the indigenous powers. Consciously at least the British wished to disturb things as little as possible. This necessitated willingness to carry on with systems of administration — political and economic — only in the light of pragmatic tests and experience from the time of the "dual government" until almost the end of the 19th century. The Permanent Settlement was tried out in Bengal, but elsewhere when once the defects of the system were noticed in operation where it was first introduced, different systems like the *Ryotwari* (individual assessment) and the *Malguzari* ("Unit" assessment) were employed for the purposes of revenue collection. Of corruption there was plenty in the early days of the rule of the East India Company and the "shaking of the Pagoda tree" produced some very interesting results. The system of government was also arbitrary at times but this was the "seed-time" of the empire where mutations were in progress. This empire was always the British-Indian empire but never an Indian empire as the Mughal empire could be termed an Indian empire. Once Babar turned his back on the cities of Central Asia his policy was never controlled by his home towns. Akbar did not have to worry about the barons of Samarkand or Bokhara or Ghazni before enacting a fiscal or industrial measure. Again the British-Indian empire was the offspring of the Industrial Revolution and, as pointed out earlier, the nascent British mercantilist-capitalism acted as its nurse-maid. The "City" dominated Calcutta (until 1912) and New Delhi as no other "city" had dominated an Indian capital at any time. This empire, again, was backed by a modern network of communications and supported by a numerous and efficient army which were its sinews and muscles while its conscience nestled deep in the liberal tradition that was then developing. The needs of the empire as much as the demands of its conscience led to the establish-

ment of new forms of education — the secular university — which created a new leadership.

We have traced, in the earlier part of this work, the changes which went on in the British-Indian administration through the 19th and the opening decades of the 20th centuries. The work of the establishment of the *Pax Britannica* was served by the creation of a new civil service, a new type of judiciary and new concepts of direct and "indirect" rule. This new state, as it appeared in India, was a limb of an international imperial system and as such could never become national though it could call forth an intensely nationalistic response from the people opposed to it. This state was characterised by three conditions, namely, that it was secular (though the British-Indian government supported the Church of England in India), that it secularized the legal institutions in the country and that it secularized the educational system. Out of all these was to spring its antithesis which came into evidence in the opening decades of the present century.

The impact of this new state on the life of the Indian people was much more pervasive than was ever possible for any state in the past. The results of this impact were twofold: destructive and rejuvenating. In the initial stages of the Western impact, as it made itself manifest through the British rule, the indigenous institutions began to show signs of rapid disintegration. The establishment of the railways shattered the isolation of the rural areas. "The steel of the railways," it is pointed out, "pierced the older India to the heart, and the blood ran out. Millions of artisans in villages and towns found that they could not compete with British manufactured goods, the import of which was greatly facilitated by the new railways. These same rail lines, by providing access to the ports and thereby to overseas market, made possible a great increase in the export of foodstuffs and industrial crops. The reserves of the peasantry were depleted and in the bad years of the 1870s and 1890s devastating famines followed. As against these and related hardships, there were certain compensating advantages. The railways conferred on the British administration an unprecedented power, and thus brought about an era of peace, and relatively speaking, law

and order" (Daniel Thorner, "The Pattern of Railway Development in India", *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, XIV, 2, pp. 201-16). The initial widening of opportunities of employment in the administrative and commercial areas led to the rapid growth of a Western-educated middle class which had no organic relationship with its prototypes in the past. It was largely, at least in the emergent stages, a bureaucratic and quasi-comprador middle class which had its thoughts conditioned either by the Government Gazette or the fluctuations on a speculative world market. The old indigenous middle class, such as it was, "had a measure of peace, style and balance in . . . attitude and conduct" while the new middle class was "driven by discontent and staggered. That peace was not of the graveyard, just as the present discontent is not divine. The middle class which is alleged to be the originator and repository of culture, is stricken by a malady. It is simultaneously preyed upon by a new sense of guilt and a feeling of denial" (See D. P. Mukerji, *Modern Indian Culture*, p. 205). The secularization of the state dethroned, as it were, the Brahmin and the Mullah, but their place could not be taken by the White Sahib. The new state had neutralized the political power of the feudal world without destroying completely a host of its representatives scattered across the continental land-mass of India. The village communities were moribund but the new municipalities and district local boards could never replace them in being living community organizations of the urban or rural people.

On balance the fact appears that "the British did not come to India for spreading civilization, groaning under the 'White-man's burden.' Neither is it true that they did everything to harm India. When both these extreme positions are abandoned, the situation can be appraised more correctly.

"In measuring the British gains from India, a rather crude answer has been attempted in the theory of the economic drain which identifies it with the whole of the Home Charges. This is obviously wrong. Only certain items of it, like the expenditure of the wars which, in fairness, should not have been charged to India, can be properly included in this category, while others are of legitimate payments, like interest on British capital

invested in India. There were, however, innumerable other ways in which the British profited or derived benefits of an exploitative character which they could not have derived if they had not been the political masters of India. By forcing complete free trade on India they were able to preserve the Indian market for British industry for a longer time than could have been possible otherwise. They were also able to manipulate the Indian exchange to the same purpose because of their political domination. They were able to use India as a base of the British Empire in the east and to pursue their imperialistic policies in Asia on the strength of the Indian army which was largely maintained out of India's money. England's transition costs during the Industrial Revolution were partly borne by India" (N. V. Sovani, "British Impact on India after 1850-57", *Journal of World History*, II, 1, pp. 77-105).

The establishment of the British-Indian state created an unprecedented situation in Indian life. There was an extension of the land under cultivation but not of such order as to absorb all the rural population whose occupations were destroyed as a result of the competition from machine-made goods. This led to an increasing pressure on land which led to fragmentation of holdings. The various revenue measures also led to a heavier incidence of taxation on the rural population while on the other hand there was the growth of landlordism often of an absentee kind. There was a beginning made in industrialization but its growth was invariably strictly controlled in such a way as to subserve the interests of British capital and British industries. In the cultural sphere there was the valuable gain in the introduction of the Western system of education and techniques. The British impact led to the rise of a state which was secular in its inspiration and working. In this it departed radically from the Hindu and Muslim states of the past. The new states owed a nominal allegiance to the Christian Church and spent amounts of money from the public revenue most of which came from people who were not Christians. But in its relations with the subject population it pursued either a policy of dividing the masses into neatly balanced religious communities or affected unvarying neutrality in the religious sphere. Secondly, the law that this state introduced and administered was a law

which, at least in certain aspects, was *a*-religious in its inspiration and effect. Thirdly, the system of education set up under the aegis of this state was secular in its theory and practice. The new universities of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta had no relationship or resemblance to the ancient universities of Nalanda and Vikramashila or the Makhtabs of Muslim India. The secularization of the state itself, of law and the system of education were the three most salient aspects of the British impact on India.

The Western impact in India first made itself manifest in the religous rather than the political sphere. Though the traditions of the Syrian Christians of Malabar hark back to the ministry of St. Thomas in the first century A.D. all well-attested evidence does not point to such high antiquity. Significant Christian missionary activity in India began in the 16th century and the Roman Catholic Church found the territories conquered by the Portuguese a fruitful field for evangelism. Force, inducements, the Inquisition and *auto-da-fe*, all these were some of the aspects of the process of the spread of Christianity in the western areas of the country in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Catholic Church produced some of the most remarkable personalities in Church history of the times and mention may be made of Fr. Stevens and Fr. De Nobili. The former is the author of the *Christapurana*, an epic on the life and mission of Jesus Christ in the Konkani language. The Jesuit priest De Nobili initiated the tradition of the study of indigenous languages and literatures. The work of the missionaries at Serampore in Bengal contributed to the development of the modern Bengali prose and journalism. The Christian missionaries ceaselessly criticised many of the aspects of the Hindu superstitious beliefs and ritualistic practices and indirectly initiated the movement for religious and social reform in India. If the success of their efforts as counted in the number of converts to Christianity was disappointing, their influence on the formative stages of Modern India was deep. Stalwarts such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy came under the influence of Christianity and through them the Christian and Western influences spread through the upper strata of Hindu society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is rightly described as the Father of Modern India.

Born at Radhanagar in the Hoogly district in Bengal in 1774 Roy was a son of a small landlord in the service of the Nawabs of Murshidabad. His family belonged to the Vaishnava sect and shared the heritage created by outstanding philosophers from Ramanuja to Chaitanya. At the age of ten Roy was sent to Patna to study Persian and Arabic through which he came under the influence of the Sufi philosophers. Two years later he went to Banaras to study Sanskrit and here he first discovered the monistic and monotheistic thought of the *Upanishads*. On his return he published a pamphlet attacking idolatry which estranged him from his orthodox family. For four years he wandered about and then began to study English and was attracted towards Christianity. He even began to study Greek and Latin to gain a better understanding of the Christian Gospels and was thus "perhaps the first earnest-minded investigator of the science of comparative religion that the world has ever produced". In 1800 he took up a government job and gradually rose to the position of a district collector. After his retirement from service in 1814 he devoted all his energies to religious and social reform. He founded an organization called the Atmiya Sabha and began holding prayer meetings and religious gatherings to preach the essentials of the new Hinduism which was presented as a monotheistic and rationalistic creed. He attacked the caste system, idolatry and the host of superstitions that went by the name of Hinduism in those days. He specially waged a bitter attack against the inhuman custom of widow-immolation (Suttee) and rendered significant help to Lord William Bentinck in his measure to outlaw the custom. In 1830 Roy founded the Brahmo Samaj which soon became the instrument of religious and social reform in Bengal. He championed the cause of freedom of the press, crusaded in favour of Western education and generally became the standard-bearer of the new social and moral philosophy which was to lead to the Indian renaissance. In 1830 he went to England to plead on behalf of the Mughal emperor and died three years later at Bristol.

"Religion", to Raja Ram Mohan Roy, "was not an intellectual luxury but a necessity of life". As so much of his social thinking was in conflict with the prevalent concepts about socio-

religious beliefs and practice, by necessity he had to become a socio-religious reformer. In this he was "the herald of a new age" and he lighted a torch which illumined a whole new vista of life. The Christian influence on him was so deep and his own study of Christianity so penetrating that his activities in the field of religious and social reform can be properly understood only in their context. The torch lighted by him was later taken up by Devendra Nath Tagore—grandfather of the great poet and mystic Rabindranath Tagore—and Keshub Chandra Sen and though, in course of time, the Brahmo Samaj became split into sects and factions and ceased to exert any wide influence on the intellectuals, the impact of its work in the rejuvenation of Hinduism cannot be underestimated. It was in this that Christianity, through these reform movements, administered tremendous shocks to the Hindu mind and conscience and in doing this performed a great historical task. As time passed Christian ethics profoundly influenced the ethical content of the neo-Hinduism of which Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the founder and Swami Vivekananda, the disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, the prophet.

Indian journalism also owes its origin to the Western impact on India. It is true that in the pre-British era there existed a system of news-gathering, and monarchs like Sher Shah and Akbar displayed special interest in it. There were also many nobles and grandees of the empire who employed their own news-writers but such a system was obviously limited in its scope. With Indian journalism began the process of the consolidation and expression of Indian public opinion and by necessity this journalism had to be a journalism of protest. The growth of the Indian press was rapid and by 1875 there were as many as 475 newspapers and periodicals. Such has been the influence of the role played by Indian journalism in the national movement that no history of this movement could be complete without numerous references to great newspapers like *The Hindu,* the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* the *Free Press of India,* the *Kesari* and the *Harijan* of Mahatma Gandhi.

The beginnings of organized public activity in the form of associations, religious and political, may also be traced to the period when the Western impact was making itself deeply felt

in Indian life. The British-Indian Association of Bengal was formed in 1851—six years before the Great Revolt—and in 1876 was formed the Bengal Association. Then, there were also the Bombay Association, the East India Association and the Sarvajanik Sabha of Poona. These reflected the opinions of the educated classes whose minds were infused with Western liberalism. Eminent leaders like Sir Surendra Nath Bannerji, Anand Mohun Bose, Dadabhai Nawroji and Mahadev Govind Ranade were associated with some of these associations. They formed, as it were, a link between the government of the day and the educated classes and expressed the aspirations of a renaissant India. The culmination of all these activities came with the foundation of the Indian National Congress which met for the first time in 1885 in Bombay.

In the earlier phases the British government encouraged the development of such associations. It was felt that they provided a sounding board for Indian opinion from which the administration could get an idea of what the educated classes in India were thinking. Britons like Allan Octavian Hume played a conspicuous part in the early career of the Indian National Congress. The first session of the Congress was attended by 72 delegates. The speeches delivered there were replete with sentiments of loyalty to the government and the demands were limited to an increasing association of Indians with the work of law-making and administration in the country. But, by the laws of its very being, the Congress had to widen its basis and the politics of petition had to become the politics of revolt. The history of the Congress from 1885 to 1947 shows this transformation and falls into three well-defined periods : 1885 to 1905 ; 1906 to 1920 ; and 1921 to 1947.

In the first phase of its career the Congress was the vehicle for the expression of liberal middle class opinion. Bombay and Calcutta were the scenes of its major activities. By 1900 British imperialism had achieved almost all of its historical objectives. It had brought the whole country, from Peshawar to Dhanushkodi and from Saurashtra to Assam, under its sway and evolved for this vast land-mass a unified system of administration for the territories under its control. The indigenous states were firmly bound to the Paramount power by treaties

and controlled by the Political Department ; the army had grown into a formidable fighting machine in the whole of Asia and British capital had entrenched itself on all strategic levels of the Indian economy. The Universities had, by now, trained some three generations of students and the leaven of Western political thought had awakened young minds to the exciting possibilities of reform and revolution. A commercial revolution of far-reaching consequences had created a new capital-owning class of Indians that was now eager to invest its wealth in the new industries like the textile. As the activities of this class expanded it was inevitably brought into conflict with the interests of the British industries. This class, therefore, especially in the larger cities, was getting ready to support any movement that would act as a lever on the administration and force it to change, however slightly, some of its economic policies.

The Hindu renaissance on the one hand and the effects of Western education on the other were to create favourable conditions for the rise of a militant nationalism. Hinduism had changed over from the defensive to a stubbornly proud role in influencing the minds of men. Much of the early militant nationalism was, therefore, bound to be coloured by Hindu ideas, especially those taken over from either the *Gita* or the lives of heroes like Rana Pratap and the great Shivaji. Western education, while it taught the young Indian minds new ideas like nationalism, freedom and revolution, also brought to them the awareness of the divergence between theory and practice on the part of the West in the East. The British spokesmen had said often that parliamentary democracy was an ideal system of government for the West but was inapplicable to the East which was roundly denounced as the home of tyranny and despotism. The psuedo-religious cults soon led to terroristic activities and the mood became increasingly one of defiance of British authority.

In this arsenal of sullenness only a spark was required to cause an explosion. It came in the form of the partition of Bengal in 1905 aimed at separation of the districts of Dacca, Chittagong and Rajashahi from Bengal and their incorporation into Assam to be named the province of East Bengal and Assam.

This was taken as an attempt at the destruction of the unity of Bengal and Bengali culture and provoked violent bitterness. The defeat of Russia by Japan in 1905 acted like a clap that reverberated across a continent and for the first time it was shown that the White Man was no longer invincible and that Asians could assert themselves only if they would unite and fight. The agitation for the annulment of the partition of Bengal developed into a national movement and created a national consciousness. The Congress was acquiring a mass basis and a radical temper.

This radical temper indicated the birth of Indian nationalism. Western liberalism had attracted Indian intellectuals but it failed to satisfy them for obvious reasons. It demanded a form of activity which belonged more to the council hall than the public square and the market-place and at this point the council halls, constituted as they were, were frustrating. Secondly, in the Indian situation, constitutionalism and liberalism were apt to be interpreted as the political faith of a middle class and the middle class in India had neither the numbers nor the strength to wage the struggle for reforms on its own. Thirdly, liberalism was the intellectual and political expression of an industrial society wherein capitalism was playing a "progressive" role in extending the material benefits of its own wealth to ever-expanding circles. The Industrial Revolution had not come to India ; what had taken place was primarily a commercial revolution. This commercial revolution had created an infinitesimal working population employed in factories and had affected the fortunes of the teeming millions of the peasantry in the countryside whose distress was becoming increasingly acute. Indian nationalism, therefore, was an offspring of a peasant *milieu* led by a class of intellectuals whose ideological hunger was fed on the ideas of the French and Italian revolutions. The religious revival was bound to give it a religious undertone and the qualities of this nationalism were admirably personified in the life and work of Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915) and Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) dominated Indian politics in the opening decades of the present century. They represented two distinct

phases and trends of Indian politics. Gokhale represented the intellectual temper of a section of Indians whose patriotism was as unquestioned as their belief in constitutionalism and liberalism was unshaken unto the last. Tilak, on the other hand, though himself a great scholar, was cast in the mould of a leader who could easily sway the masses and rouse them to action. The two trends which these two leaders symbolised were bound to come into conflict and by 1920 the "moderates" had to retreat in favour of the "radicals". The partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911 and Indian nationalism had won its first successful round. Mrs. Annie Besant, the theosophist leader, joined the Congress in 1914 and gave it a new impulse. The Home Rule Movement gathered momentum and reached its peak in 1917. The slogan of loyalty was now definitely set aside in favour of one of revolt against the empire though the goal was still described as Dominion Status. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms having proved disappointing, a wave of bitter unrest followed. The atrocities at Jallianwalla Bagh only helped to inflame public anger and repression failed to crush the spirit of the people.

It was at this stage that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a Barrister-at-Law, emerged as the leader of the Indian masses. Gandhi was born in 1869, at Porbunder in Saurashtra, in a family of officials. After completing his early education at Porbunder, Rajkot and Bhavnagar, he proceeded to England where he was called to the Bar in 1891. After a brief sojourn in India where he found the going hard in his profession Gandhi went to South Africa in 1893 to plead the case of an Indian client. Here he experienced some of the most objectionable aspects of the White Man's racial arrogance and to fight these he began organizing the Indian community in South Africa. Gandhi had come under a profound influence of the ideas of Tolstoy and Ruskin and was developing his own technique of non-violent non-cooperation. Through his visits to India Gandhi had kept himself in touch with Indian leaders like Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Gokhale and Tilak. His main field of work at this time, however, was in South Africa. It was at Phoenix in Durban that the Mahatma had his first *Ashrama* where the earliest experiments in rigorous spiritual living were carried out.

It was also in South Africa that Gandhi first applied, on a mass scale, the principle of civil disobedience which figured so prominently later in the Indian struggle.

Gandhi came to India in 1915 and it was at this time that he was first called *Mahatma* (Lofty Soul) by the poet Rabindranath Tagore. The Congress had now come of age, tried and tested through several struggles with the British Imperialism. In Gandhi was found a leader, unswerving in his ideals and determined to pursue them unto the last. The strength of nationalism, as pointed out by D. W. Brogan, lies "in its provision of a political home, of a political order which provides a sense of kinship, not merely of membership. A nation is a family, not a mere institution" (*The Price of Revolution*, 1951, p. 110). Gandhi, as a prophet of Indian nationalism, had, at the very outset, clearly understood the potentialities of nationalism as a force for good or evil and it was his intention to make it an ennobling force so that it may provide the Indian people with a sense of familial kinship. He lifted the Indian struggle from the plane of a mere political fight and transformed it into an ethical conflict between right and might. The acceptance of non-cooperation as a technique of national struggle by the Congress, at its annual session in Nagpur in 1920, ushered the Gandhian era in Indian politics. The movements of Champaran, Bardoli, Kaira, Dandi and finally the "Quit India" campaign of 1942 were the steps of the Indian Giant that had awakened and was now on the march. The ideal was no longer that of Dominion Status for the Congress in 1927 had declared that it had pledged itself to struggle for complete independence.

Though the "moderates" had finally to surrender their leadership to the radicals they remained, for a long while, a significant force in Indian political life. They had produced great leaders whose contributions to the development of Indian nationalism were of far-reaching influence. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Chitta Ranjan Das (1870-1925), Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (1875-1949), Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1947), Pandit Motilal Nehru (1861-1931) and the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri (1869-1946) were personalities towering in their stature and profound in their understanding of the problems of India. Theirs was a constructive statesmanship

which excelled in grappling with intricate constitutional and legal problems and the Nehru Report of 1928 has, even today, an interest as an indication and a behest of what Indian leaders were capable of achieving not only in agitational politics but also in the much more complicated and difficult field of finding solutions to the problems of national life. The Nehru Report was the first Indian attempt to frame a constitution for India. Gokhale was one of the founders of the Servants of India Society whose members dedicated their lives to work in the cause of social, moral and intellectual progress of the Indian people. Gokhale's opinions were set forth only after detailed study of the problems that faced the country and were such that they were respected even by his opponents. He was a brilliant speaker, a tireless worker in the cause of Indian nationalism and it is significant that Mahatma Gandhi regarded Gokhale, among all the Indian leaders, his political preceptor. Gokhale served with remarkable distinction on legislative bodies, committees and commissions, and symbolised in his thought and work the best elements in the Indian liberal tradition. C. R. Das belonged to a Brahmo family of Bengal and though more "radical" than Gokhale could still be regarded as an outstanding "moderate" political leader along with Motilal Nehru, the father of Jawaharlal Nehru. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who was often associated with Dr. M. R. Jayakar, had served on several fact-finding bodies appointed by the Government and often functioned as an intermediary between the Congress and the Government. He was one of the founders of the All-India Liberal Federation which carried great prestige in spite of a limited following. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, an orthodox Hindu, was a staunch follower of the Congress creed and was the founder of that great institution of learning and culture, the Banaras Hindu University.

There could be no greater contrast between father and son than there was between Pandit Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru. Motilal was an eminently successful lawyer who had amassed a fortune. The Nehrus were Kashmiris by origin but had settled in Uttar Pradesh for generations. It was in Lucknow and Allahabad that the elder Nehru had established himself as a leading member of the Bar. Jawaharlal Nehru

was born on November 14, 1889 and spent his boyhood in Allahabad where he was educated at home by a number of governesses and tutors among whom was Ferdinand T. Brooks, an ardent theosophist. In 1905 Jawaharlal was sent to England to the Harrow School and later to Trinity College, Cambridge, where in 1910 he obtained a Tripos in the Natural Sciences. Until 1912 he lived in London qualifying for becoming a Barrister-at-Law. His years in England left a deep impress on Jawaharlal's mind for there he imbibed a lasting influence of the English temper and tradition. As he himself said once he had become "a queer mixture of the East and West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere". He had acquired a fund of information about India's past both from his childhood teachers as also from his wide and avid reading. Later he had come under the spell of the Russian Revolution and was an ardent Marxist over a number of years. But Jawaharlal could never become a rigid theorist and is at heart always a pragmatist. On his return to India he threw himself into the maelstrom of politics and spent some 12 years in prison. He had become by 1930 one of the outstanding leaders of the Congress and Gandhi looked upon him as his political, though not his spiritual, heir. Jawaharlal travelled incessantly across the country and the sight of masses upon masses of men waiting patiently to see and hear him exhilarated him. His became an inspired and inspiring leadership and his contemplative mind enabled him to be the philosopher of Indian nationalism to an extent scarcely possible for anyone else. Often irascible—his outbursts of ill-temper are notorious—and domineering, Nehru has been idolized by the masses for over a quarter century, and is today the unchallenged leader of the Indian masses.

While the Congress was waging the struggle against imperialism through a variety of means like the "no-tax" campaigns, boycott of British goods, non-cooperation and deliberate defiance of laws, there were other organizations working in different directions. Of these there were the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League, the Scheduled Castes Federation and the Akali Dal. Founded in 1928, twenty-two years after the founding of the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha has often been a spokesman of Hindu orthodoxy and chauvinism. The effective-

ness of the organization has always been rather limited. The Muslim League, until 1935, alternately criticised and cooperated with the Congress. We have referred in an earlier chapter to the Aligarh Movement and its role in the development of the Muslim political consciousness as also the effect of the operation of the communal electorates on Muslim politics. From Syed Ahmed Khan to Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the Muslim leadership has always been haunted by suspicions and fear of the Hindus the roots of which may be traced to a sense of inferiority felt by the Muslims themselves ever since the disappearance of the Mughal empire and the defeat of the Great Revolt of 1857. However irrational may be the fears, there can be little doubt that these existed and these were fanned into a bitter hatred by the politics of the Muslim League. The logical culmination of this came in 1940 when, at its Lahore session, the Muslim League declared that nothing short of a separate state would satisfy the Muslims. It proclaimed that "no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the basic principle, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are in a numerical majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'independent states' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign. . . ." The resolution was vague in its territorial and constitutional implications though the sense of the demand was quite clear. The Congress reaction to it was one of shock and incredulity while the Muslims, with notable exceptions, greeted it with the feeling that at last the substance of their "collective unconscious" was expressed and uncompromisingly stated. In the election results of 1935 the Muslim League had fared badly, for in both of the so-called Muslim majority areas, non-League ministries were in power. The League demand for a separate homeland, however, gathered momentum and political friction led to communal riots, the worst of which came in 1946. The Congress had tried to allay the fears of the Muslims but had failed and finally agreed to the partition of the country in 1947. In August 1947 the new state of Pakistan came into existence

with Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah as its Governor-General and Liaquat Ali Khan as the Prime Minister. The new state sustained great loss in the death of Mr. Jinnah in 1948 and the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951. The state of Pakistan has scarcely had a smooth career beset as it has been by conflicts between its western and eastern wings, the eclipse of the Muslim League and the proliferation of political factions, groups and parties, each trying to secure the reins of control in its hands. With the partition of the country the historical role of the Muslim League in the post-1930 Indian politics was completed. The organization lost much of its force though some of its provincial units function rather feebly in some areas. Many of its members have now been sympathetic to the Congress and a large number of Muslims have joined the Congress Party. Beyond issuing occasional statements concerning the rights and interests of the Indian Muslims and securing a few seats in the local and federal legislatures the League has been practically inactive as an organization.

The emergence of independence has radically changed the politics of the Indian nation. The Indian National Congress, which so long functioned as the national front of all patriotic forces, now became one of the political parties in the Union. Since 1937 the two dominant trends within the Congress have been nationalism and socialism. The Russian Revolution of 1917 created a profound influence on the minds of many young Indian intellectuals. Jawaharlal Nehru himself had read Marx avidly and had professed, time and again, a great love for the Russian Revolution though he was not blind to many of the undesirable aspects of Russian communism in theory and practice. Marxism had a natural appeal for the colonial peoples and the Soviets had made conspicuous efforts at enlisting many of the leading Asian intellectuals in their intellectual army. As early as 1918 they claimed to have established contacts with some Indian delegates and two years later, at the Congress of the Peoples of the East held at Baku, Indian representatives were reported to have been present. In the early 20's communist publications began to make their appearance in India and in 1924 the Communist International decided to encourage the formation of the Communist Party of India.

The party was then formed in 1925 though its constitution and programme were not made public for two years. In 1924 came the famous Meerut Conspiracy Case in which leading Indian Marxists were indicted by the British Government for subversive activities planned to overthrow the government by violence. The communists captured the trade unions and conducted some of the most spectacular strikes in Bombay, Calcutta and other places. In their relations with the Congress the communists pursued an opportunist line joining it when it suited their line and quitting it when they felt it was no longer useful. Inside the Congress the socialists formed their own group called the Congress Socialist Party in 1934. The communists were closely watched by the Congress leadership which foiled their attempts at infiltration from time to time. The communists have always been working under the close supervision, if not control, of the Communist International and the Communist Bureau of Information (Comintern and Cominform) led by the Soviet Union and this foreign control had led them along adventurist paths. In the average Indian mind the Communist Party has often figured as a projection of a foreign power and the patriotism of its members has occasionally been regarded as being not above suspicion. In 1942 the communists opposed the Congress and collaborated with the British government and the effects of this anti-national action they have not been able to live down since. Their support of the Muslim League demand for Pakistan estranged them further and their periodical resort to violent techniques has isolated them from the masses. In the 1952 election they secured some five per cent of the total vote and in the state election in Andhra in 1954 they suffered a crushing defeat. The recent events in Eastern Europe and the process of de-Stalinization seems to have utterly demoralized them and the party is now virtually a house divided against itself.

From 1934 to 1948 the socialists functioned as a group within the Indian National Congress. In the early years they worked in close cooperation with Nehru who encouraged their efforts to give a more radical complexion to the Congress thinking and action. In the movement of 1942 the socialists played a conspicuous part. In 1948 they decided to leave the

Congress and form their own party, the Socialist Party of India. The party promised to become a major democratic opposition to the Congress but suffered crushing reverses in the 1952 election when it secured only ten per cent of the total vote. After the elections the Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party led by Acharya J. B. Kripalani decided to merge and form the Praja Socialist Party. The K.M.P.P. was a group of dissident Congressmen who were sharply critical of the policies of the Congress Party.

The prospect of the election brought into existence a number of new parties. Among these may be mentioned the Ram Rajya Parishad and the Jan Sangh, two parties appealing to Hindu orthodox sentiment. The Jan Sangh lost much of its influence with the death of its leader Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji in 1954. The Scheduled Castes Federation has been active over the last 20 years and was, until his demise in 1956, led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who was, incidentally, one of the architects of the Indian Constitution. The Federation (now the Republican Party of India) claims to speak on behalf of the untouchables whose number is estimated as over 60 million. The Sikhs are organized by the Akali Dal led by the redoubtable Master Tara Singh. The Akali Dal, by a recent compact, will cease to be a political party and allow its members to join the Congress Party. The tribal peoples have their own organizations like the Jharkhand Party. The Nagas of the north-east frontier had risen in an armed revolt during 1955-56 and under the leadership of A. Z. Phizo demanded a separate state. The Naga separatist demand is suspected to have been encouraged by some foreign interests and police operations in the difficult mountain terrain have dispersed the rebellious Nagas into the jungles.

V

The end of the British empire in India brought the people of India on the stage of history where they are now able to fashion their story themselves. The British captured power from the hands of the Mughal Emperors, the Maratha Chiefs, the Nizam, the Nawabs and the Maharajas but when they left

it was taken over not by the heirs of the old rulers but by the representatives of the people of India. Under the impact of the British rule the old centres of power were either liquidated or neutralized and through the emergence of political parties the masses of the people rose to a new historical consciousness. The rise of nationalism, thus, is an event of great revolutionary significance in the history of India and has no prototype in the country's past. The administrative consolidation of the country led to the political unification of the nation, a stage of history always dreamt of but scarcely realized in the past. This nationalism first rose as a protest against alien political and cultural domination and had, in its emergent stages, religious and racial overtones. The West, as manifested in the British rule, had posed a total challenge to the existing patterns of Indian life. The answer to this challenge could be found only in nationalism which, in the process of its birth, acted as a catalytic agent bringing about fundamental changes in the thoughts and ideas of the people. The mental horizons suddenly expanded and the thoughts of world events affected as much the young intellectual in the university as the common man in the market-place. Along with national consciousness came an Asian consciousness the logical result of which was the Bandung Conference of 1955. But mere nationalism, as a political protest against alien domination, was not enough and, in order to sustain itself, it had to find a new social and economic content. The attempt to find such a content was made in two directions, one of Gandhism and the other of Socialism. Gandhism is individualistic, village-centred and predominantly moral in its interpretation of human life and action; Socialism is apt to be collectivistic, urban in its emphasis and equalitarian in its temper. Efforts have been made from time to time to synthesize the two and a system described as Gandhian Socialism has been put forward. Like other attempts at compromise Gandhian Socialism also raises more problems than it can solve. It is again permissible to argue as to how far Gandhism is a living force in the Indian political and administrative thinking today. The Congress government, first in its Industrial Policy Statement of 1948 and later in the Avadi Resolution of 1955, has chosen the path of state planning on the premise of creating

ultimately a Socialist economy. Under the circumstances of an under-developed economy, Socialism of one sort or another appears as the only means of bringing about an industrial and economic revolution in the country. The new state, the architect of which was Jawaharlal Nehru, had to be, by the conditions of its own being and dynamism, a welfare state. The blueprint of this state was offered by Nehru when he said : "Our economy and social structure have outlived their day, and it has become a matter of urgent necessity for us to refashion them so that they may promote the happiness of all our people in things material and spiritual. We have to aim deliberately at a social philosophy which seeks a fundamental transformation of the structure, at a society which is not dominated by the urge for private profit and by individual greed and in which there is a fair distribution of political and economic power. We must aim at a classless society, based on cooperative effort, with opportunities for all. To realise this we have to pursue peaceful methods in a democratic way." This is the testament of faith of a democratic socialist. It is worth our while to point out here that whereas Gandhism aims at class-conciliation the Congress, as interpreted by Nehru, is dedicated to the complete elimination of classes. In such thinking Gandhi's theory of "trusteeship" has no place. Again the emphasis is on transformation of the society rather than on transformation of the individual leading to a transformation of the social group of which he is a member. If the First Plan laid stress on the creation of large-scale irrigational and hydro-electric facilities the Second Plan is so spelled out as to accelerate the development of the basic industries finally leading to the much-awaited industrial revolution in India. While the cottage-industries occupy a pivotal place in the Gandhian economics the big machine dominates the thinking of the new state. Nehru himself had stated in 1938 : "The economy based on the latest technical achievements of the day must necessarily be the dominating one. If technology demands the big machine, as it does today in a large measure, then the big machine with all its implications and consequences must be accepted. Where it is possible, in terms of that technology, to decentralize production, this would be desirable. But, in

any event, the latest technique has to be followed, and to adhere to out-worn and out-of-date methods of production, except as a temporary and stop-gap measure, is to arrest growth and development." The tremendous experiment that is now going on in India is aimed at the creation of a new national society based on industrialization, urbanization and parliamentary democracy. To this new state and new society Gandhism can contribute a structure of values but not a methodology of production, a conscience but not the sinews and muscles. The Indian village has been dying over the last hundred years; its ailment can be temporarily alleviated but it is doubted by many whether it can ever be enabled to play a part which was its rightful role in the old society. Its final passing away will undoubtedly leave a painful void in the life and culture of the nation, but that is the price demanded by history.

The General Election of 1952 was the first experiment conducted by the Indian nation in the practice of a popular parliamentary democracy. It involved the participation of 176 million voters using some 620,000,000 ballot papers at 90,000 polling stations across the length and breadth of the country. By and large it was a success which held out a promise for the future. The results of the election brought out several interesting trends. The Congress emerged as the strongest single group* —which was not surprising. What was surprising was the failure of the opposition. The reasons for this failure were that the opposition was fragmented and that the independent candidate still played a perplexing role in the electoral reckoning of the people. Of the opposition parties only two could be called national parties and these were the Socialist Party and the Communist Party of India. These together polled some 16 per cent of the total vote. The independent candidates and the regional parties and groups carried away some 37 per cent of the total vote. While the socialist failure was the failure of leadership and organization the communist failure was largely due to the party's identification with a foreign caucus, its past a-national and anti-national role and its adventurist tactics.

* In the General Election of 1957 the Congress secured 65.1% of the seats; the C. P. I. vote went up to 10.5%.

The communal parties also failed and thereby showed that communalism, as a political issue, was dying if not already dead.

Finally, there arise two questions which may permit only of speculative answers at this stage. The first is: will India develop a two-party system on the lines of the British model or will the recent French experience be repeated? The second is the dilemma of power expressed by Gandhi when he said that he looked upon any "increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress". Nine years is too short a period for political tendencies to become crystallized into a system. But if the indications of the last General Election are reliable at all they reveal the fact that the process of the "fragmentation of political consciousness" will continue at least for some time before the trend is halted and reversed. It is true that during the last four years there have been mergers of "like-minded" parties as between the Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party and smaller groups like the Forward Bloc. But this was neutralized when the Praja-Socialist Party itself split almost vertically when Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia formed his Socialist Party in 1955. As yet there is no merger between the Jan Sangh and the Ram Rajya Parishad or the Hindu Mahasabha and though the Akali Dal is ready to effect a political merger with the Congress, the Scheduled Castes Federation (the Republican Party of India), and the tribal parties like the Jharkhand still hold a part of the field. The agitation over the creation of linguistic states has cost the Congress its popularity in some areas but this loss is not large enough to seriously affect the electoral fortunes of the Party. From time to time there have been talks of election adjustments and coalitions but these, by their very nature as being temporary alliances of political incompatibles, cannot be counted as major factors of change in the political landscape. It is likely that the opposition will increase its numerical content but it is also certain that it will continue to display ideological and operational diversity

both inside and outside the legislatures. The simple fact is that a capable and effective alternative to the Congress is yet to emerge and, in the immediate future at least, the Congress party will retain in its hands the reins of power. But this is not a phenomenon peculiar to India for in neighbouring Burma a similar pattern prevails. The pattern of parliamentary democracy in the immediate future in India will, therefore, be neither the British nor the French model but will be that of a strong party confronted by a fragmented and weak opposition.

The dilemma of power in a welfare state, based on the premise of a parliamentary democracy, is acute and challenging. India has had a long tradition of authoritarian government over the centuries. In India it is inevitable that the initiative for bringing about social and economic changes should come from the government. All through the British era the government has always been the largest single employer for the urban classes. The new state, compelled by the dynamism of its own being, has to be an agency that has to bring about an industrial revolution in an under-developed country. The leadership of the state in economic affairs, therefore, is inevitable and India has gone along this path a long way. The railways and other means of communication like the airways are nationalized. Life insurance has been nationalized and state trading is bound to be a factor in the commercial life of the country very soon. The basic industries are either owned or controlled by the state and in the years to come the state will be the largest investor in the developing economy of the country. Such a process, in spite of the most liberal intentions in the world, leads to a large concentration of power in the hands of the state—which in everyday experience means the bureaucracy and the technocracy—which faces the danger of becoming a government by the commissars. The Indian bureaucracy is an efficient machine and has been a stabilizing force in the life of the new nation. It has developed sound traditions of respect for the legislative and executive leadership of the country and as such is not likely to develop into anything radically different from the British model. The only antidote against the misuse of such vast concentration of power in the hands of the state is an energetic and alive two-

party system with the opposition acting as an unrelenting check on the exercise of its great authority by the party in power. To the extent a democratic opposition develops in the country will depend the shape of the new state in the years to come. India today is a socialist welfare state and its heritage of spiritual values which it derives from Gandhism can be maintained only on the sound working of a parliamentary democracy. The future, though intriguing in its problems, is challenging in its promise.

CHAPTER TEN

SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

THE LAST CENSUS of India taken in 1951 shows that India has a population of some 360 million living in an area as large as Europe without Russia or half the area of the United States of America. This vast population is distributed in a dozen very large cities, a few hundred towns and 600,000 villages. It speaks 14 major languages and hundreds of dialects. Some 85 per cent of this population professes the Hindu religion, the rest being distributed among the other great religions of the world ; Muslims number some 40 million or roughly 9 per cent of the population and the rest are divided into Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis and Jews. Then there are also the tribal peoples who practise what are generally described as "animistic cults".

There is the same racial variety in the Indian population. Negritos, Proto-Australoids, Mediterraneans, Mongoloids and Caucasians are the largest racial units to which may be added cultural groups which entered India from time to time and became assimilated in the Indian population. These were the Persians (5th-4th century B.C.), Greeks and Bactrians (327-100 B.C.), Scythians (100 B.C.–A.D. 100), Hepthalites or White Huns (5th-7th century A.D.), Arabs, Tatars, Turks and Abyssinians (A.D. 700-1600). Each one of these groups contributed certain peculiar characteristics to Indian life. Indian life, therefore, is a fabric woven out of many different strands.

I

The life of the Hindus, through the centuries, has been moulded by four factors ; religion, village, caste and family.

Of these we shall deal with religion in another place. Indian economy has been one of subsistence. The hand plough, the spinning wheel, and the bullock-cart admirably symbolize the self-contained Indian village community which was the unit of economic endeavour. It is true that the city made its appearance at a very early stage, a fact borne out by the description of the capital of the Imperial Mauryas, Pataliputra, and other large cities, by Megasthenes, Fa Hian and Hiuen Tsang. But these cities were quite different in their composition and role from the cities of modern industrial countries. More often they were a combination of a market-place and centre of administration without an important productive role in the economic life of the country. Life was enmeshed in a primarily rural-agricultural *milieu*.

This economy and the backward means of communication in a vast country tended to create regionalism and a specialization of functions at an early date. The Indian village is described as an "aggregate of cultivated holdings with or without some waste area attached to it, and usually it has a central site where the dwelling houses are congregated together, with the lands of the village spreading round about the central site in a series of concentric circles". That such a village of recent times was not substantially different from one of antiquity is shown by the description of an average village in the ancient Buddhist and Hindu books. The population of such a village largely consisted of peasant proprietors who owned their land and paid fixed taxes to the royal treasury. The artisans generally produced all that was required by the community in the matter of consumer goods like cloth, pots and pans, furniture and metalware. There was little surplus and such as it was found its way to the nearest market-town. The village society lived in cooperation and interdependence. This self-sufficiency gave village life a stability and the wars and revolutions in the cities produced the faintest ripples on the placid surface of village life.

In these villages life was dominated by the rules of the caste system. The caste system has been one of the most persistent forms of social organization and has influenced even Islam and Christianity in the country to a certain extent. The term

'caste' is of a comparatively recent origin ; it was first used by the Portuguese to imply a social arrangement designed to preserve the purity of race. There are many definitions of the system and each one emphasizes one or more of its aspects. Caste, thus, is defined as a "corporate group, exclusive and in theory at least rigorously hereditary. It possesses a certain traditional and independent organization, a chief and a council, and whenever occasion demands it meets in assemblies endowed with more or less full authority." Another definition finds the origin of the system in racial division, and a third connects it with occupation. Its most striking characteristics are that membership of a caste group is hereditary, with rigid rules governing the choice of occupation and life-partner in marriage; in many castes there are councils vested with quasi-judicial powers to punish the offender violating the rules of the caste. Finally, there are also elaborate rules determining inter-dining and the use of water and essentially the system is hierarchical with the *Brahmin* at the top and the *Shudra* occupying the lowest rung of the caste ladder.

The two Indian terms used in relation to caste throw some light on the historical development of the system. The first is *varna* which means colour, complexion, and was used by the early Aryans to differentiate themselves from the dark-skinned non-Aryans. This was the first division in the emergent Indian society. The Aryans came as invaders and became political conquerors and regarded themselves as superior, racially and culturally, to the non-Aryan. Within the early Aryan society there were developing three broad occupational groups, namely, the soldier-administrator or *Kshatriya*, the priest or *Brahmin*, and the agriculturist-artisan or *Vaishya*. The Aryans also took numerous slaves from among the conquered non-Aryan population and these were called the *Dasas*. While theoretically there was no possibility of equality, and consequently intermingling, between the Aryan and the *Dasa*, the barriers separating the three occupational groups within the Aryan society were neither rigid nor insurmountable at this stage. As occupations developed and occupational skills came to be handed down in hereditary fashion, the occupational groups began to harden into closed groups and became castes.

Many of the castes of today clearly show their occupational basis such as the castes following the occupations of smiths, tailors and oilmen. The institution of slavery in Aryan society had a profound influence on the development of the caste system on the one hand and the status of women on the other. The slaves were given the more menial tasks involving physical labour and in course of time there developed the idea of the identity of lower social status with tasks involving strenuous physical labour. Once this identity was accepted a large number of professions were associated with an inferior social status and consequently the profession of learning and priesthood came to be accepted as the highest and the *Brahmin* became the highest caste. The large number of female slaves in an Aryan household tended to depress the status of women in general. In the *Rig Veda*, however, there is no specific mention of caste as we understand the institution today and the status of women was high. Child-marriages were unknown and widow-remarriage was not uncommon. There were also very few taboos concerning food and drink.

The development of ritual also tended to encourage the growing importance of the *Brahmin*. In the early Aryan times most of the religious ceremonies were fairly simple and did not require the help of a priest. Such were the household sacrifices which concerned the daily religious devotions of the average Aryan. Of course some of the big rites, like the Coronation and the horse-sacrifices, were very complicated in their ritual and these required the assistance of a number of trained priests. When the *Vedas* became sacred books the task of memorising their contents and learning the ritual described in them required a long period of learning and training which the busy *Kshatriya* and the *Vaishya* could ill afford. Hence the *Brahmin* caste must have been the first to emerge as a closed group, the membership of which came to be restricted to certain families.

Though race formed one of the bases of the emergent caste system it very soon disappeared as the basis of social distinction. In spite of the stigma attached to mixed marriages, in practice the mingling of races went on rapidly and very soon the Aryans lost their distinct racial identity with the growth of a composite "Indian race". The *Dasa* now became accepted

as a member of this composite community and was now called the *Shudra*. The composite society was then divided into four groups, namely, *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya* and *Shudra*. In course of time numerous racial and tribal groups were also assimilated and each of these became a separate caste. In fact, the caste system came in handy for the absorption of these groups into Hindu society and the tribal bases of caste are indicated in some of the caste groups like the Rajputs and the Ahirs. With their gradual expansion inland the Aryans came into contact with some of the most primitive tribal groups whose social usages, customs, manners and food habits were repugnant to the Aryan. It is possible that with the assimilation of such groups in the emergent Indian society the institution of untouchability must have begun its career. In the early religious texts there are references to the avoidance of the sight or presence of the *Shudra* at the time of recitation of the sacred texts or performance of Aryan ritual. It is said, for instance, that a *Brahmin* must interrupt his study of the sacred texts if he discovers that there is a *Shudra* present. Such references clearly show that the custom of regarding the *Shudra* as unclean and his presence as polluting at certain times had made its appearance as early as the 2nd century B.C. This temporary and ritualistic "untouchability" soon developed into life-long "untouchability" for the *Shudra* and in the account of Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim who came to India in the early part of the 7th century A.D., we have a mention of such life-long untouchability in the case of certain groups like the *Chandalas* who were required to warn the passer-by of their coming or presence on the road by striking two blocks of wood against each other. This would show that the institution of untouchability had been firmly established by the 7th century A.D. and the succeeding ages simply developed it into its manifold ramifications.

The institution of untouchability was unjust and inhuman. For an untouchable it meant living death and he suffered innumerable disabilities. Not only was his touch defiling but for him were reserved the most menial of menial tasks. The law-books give him few rights and describe his numerous responsibilities. By bringing into being and perpetuating untouchability

through the centuries the Hindus condemned a large section of their co-religionists to a permanently inferior and humiliating status. Untouchability, in effect, became the greatest stigma on Hinduism.

The caste system and its correlate, the institution of untouchability, have been great divisive factors in Hindu society. In fairness to Hinduism it must be stated that the caste began as a social institution and only after a long time acquired religious sanction. But when it did acquire religious sanction it led to the institutionalization of injustices reflected in the law-codes. By laying down rules governing the practice of occupations, endogamy and eating and drinking, the caste system fragmented Hindu society into myriad small groups, all mutually exclusive. It prevented social mobility, stratified occupational skills and made the growth of national unity well-nigh impossible. That its rules were not easily accepted by the people is shown in the Buddhist and Jain revolt against the caste system. The Buddha was the first to denounce it openly and in his order were admitted *Brahmins* and *Shudras* alike. After the disappearance of Buddhism from its homeland the caste system became more rigid than ever.

The family in India has always been a joint patriarchal group. Its members are related to each other by the ties of blood and represented as many as three generations. The family included all the agnates, held property in common, worshipped its gods in common and shared the food cooked in common. The *pater familias* held great powers and generally exercised them with a great sense of responsibility. Within the family the relations among members were characterized by filial affection and loyalty and such a family served as a great stabilizing force in times of crisis. The women were respected and honoured though in rights of inheritance they possessed proprietary rights only over such gifts as they received at the time of their marriage or presents given to them by their husbands, fathers or brothers from time to time. Polygamy was permitted and practised among the more wealthy, but the ideal was always that of monogamy. A husband could discard his wife and take another if she failed to bear him any male children or if she showed any physical or mental defects.

Divorce being not permissible among the higher castes such discarded wives suffered great misery. Likewise widow-remarriage went out of vogue by the 8th century A.D. and the widows had to live a life of economic dependence on their sons. Among several castes, however, both divorce and widow-remarriage were not only permitted but also widely practised and in these cases the women of these castes enjoyed greater freedom than those of the higher castes.

The occasions of festivity were the great religious functions like the birthdays of the Divine incarnations, Rama and Krishna, and certain days sacred to Shiva. Travel was encouraged by the practice of pilgrimages to the sacred places like Dwarka in Saurashtra, Puri in Orissa, Haradwar in the Himalayas and Rameshwaram in the south. The festival of lights, which symbolized the victory of virtue over wickedness, and Holi, the spring festival, added colour and gaiety to the life of the hard-working villager. A picture of village life as lived in Bengal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is drawn by a Bengali poet and may well be taken as representative of conditions in general all over the country. "The Muslims lived in a quarter separate from that of the Hindus and had their *maulavis*, who taught boys in little schools, and their *mullahs*, who met together for the hearing of cases among their co-religionists, always referring to the *Koran* for guidance in their adjudication—an instance of the extent to which the villagers had their own system of judicial administration. The influence of the Hindu environment was seen in the Muslim social divisions, for there were functional groups based on trades and occupations, and in one case on religion, for the families of Hindus who had been converted to Hinduism formed a separate group bearing a separate name. The *Brahmins* were in another quarter with their temples and *tols*, i.e., schools in which Sanskrit education was imparted. They consisted of *Brahmins* of a higher class and of a lower class in charge of temple worship, who subsisted on contributions given by the villagers, such as a pint of milk from the milkman, a cup of oil from the oilman, and a packet of sweetmeats from the village confectioner. Others gave them small monthly presents in cash, in the form of cowry-shells, which constituted the currency among a people of small means and

few worldly possessions. The village bards were similarly dependent on the charity of their neighbours, begging from house to house. Trade was in the hands of the *Vaishyas* who were said to be 'a happy set of men, always buying and selling'. Trade was not merely local, for they went long journeys by river, their boats going out loaded with local produce and returning with cargoes of luxury articles, such as sandalwood, conch-shells, *pashtu*-shawls, and Tibetan fly-whisks. The professional classes were represented chiefly by doctors and the writer-caste (Kayasths) ; the latter were proud of their learning, boasted that they were the ornaments of the place, and on that account claimed that they should have the best lands and houses rent-free. Doctors appear to have thriven, going about dressed in fine clothes with books under their arms ; as these books were of palm-leaf, it may be presumed that paper had not reached the villages. They seem to have been empirics and possibly quacks, in some cases puffing out their chests and declaring a cure had been effected, in others hurriedly leaving the house with some excuse if they thought the disease incurable" (O'Malley, *Modern India and the West*, pp. 10-11).

Life in the villages was thus highly organized. Each caste had its own social and economic place and though there was never any large economic surplus, starvation was rare except in the periods of the great famines. The coming of Islam produced some far-reaching influences. Islam knew of no caste divisions and much less untouchability for it preached the universal brotherhood of man in Islam. Imperial patronage and economic advantages as also occasional forcible conversions brought many converts to Islam from among the Hindus. The advantages for the lowest castes among the Hindus from their conversion to Islam were obviously striking and many of these embraced the new faith. But in spite of all these factors the number of Muslim converts, in relation to the total population, was always small. This may be explained as due to the remarkable hold which Hinduism had on the whole life of its votary. Religion formed the core of life—social, cultural and spiritual ; it was the central point of reference in relation to almost all aspects of life. For the Hindu it gave a definite

place in the scheme of things and provided an answer to every question he needed to ask. Any change in this meant a separation not only from the family but also the larger society and this was always a crucial consideration in the matter of conversion. This explains why, in spite of all the advantages which Islam first and Christianity later have enjoyed, in the peculiar social and religious *milieu* in India both the faiths failed to gain an appreciable number of converts. Islam and Christianity gave tremendous shocks to Hindu society but the results in the two cases were somewhat different. While the violence attendant upon some phases of proselytizing activities of Islam resulted in a hardening of the Hindu attitude which sometimes went to the extremes of orthodoxy in belief and social practices, the impact of Christianity and with it of Western education, led to social reform and a revival of a new Hinduism among the educated classes of the country. Especially two Western concepts created revolutionary changes in the thinking of the educated Indian ; the first was the concept of the basic equality of all men and the other was the importance of the individual. This doctrine of equality ran counter to the premises on which the caste system was founded. It created great movements of social reform as shown by the activities of Ram Mohun Roy and Vivekananda, Ranade and Agarkar and a host of others in various parts of the country. These reformers crusaded against some of the most glaring evils of the caste system and agitated for the grant of equal rights for women. They fought the custom of child-marriages (incidentally in most of the cases, in effect, such child-marriages meant only a ceremonial betrothal and the bride went to live with her husband only after puberty) and dowry and numerous other invidious social customs. Education, however, was confined only to the cities and the towns and it always took some time before the reform movement reached the villages. The establishment of the railways and the introduction of the economy of cash-crops brought the villages into contact with the cities and the impact of the city began to be felt in ever widening circles.

The impact of the West on Indian life was felt in several directions simultaneously. The different systems of land-

tenures imposed by the British brought about far-reaching changes in agrarian relations. The Permanent Settlement, introduced by Lord Cornwallis, made peasant-proprietors, almost overnight as it were, tenants of the rent-collectors who now became landlords. There then followed a period of extortionate demands in rents and evictions following inability to pay these rents. All over the country there began the process of fragmentation and subinfeudation of holdings and the numbers of agricultural labourers suffering chronic unemployment and underemployment grew steadily. Land became a marketable commodity and the growth of industries attracted a large rural population to the growing cities. The decay of the village communities with the loss of power for the traditional authorities in these communities, consequent upon the institution of governmental authority over the entire area, drained village life of most of its socially cohesive content. The villager was now confronted, not with the traditional authority which sprang from immemorial custom from among his own fellow-villagers, but with a bureaucracy whose working he could not understand. The bonds which held the village together were torn asunder but there was nothing to replace the old framework. Village life was now adrift.

The new towns and cities lived upon the villages without rendering any appreciable assistance to them. The gap between town and country tended to widen and the barriers separating the two were not only economic but social and cultural as well. While the institutionalized injustices in the caste system continued they were now augmented with progressive pauperization. The new government gave the rural folk peace but not prosperity. Ignorance, filth and poverty rampaged the countryside and there began that "night of the soul" than which nothing could be darker.

Such a set of conditions has also attended social changes elsewhere. The progress of early industrialization in England also imposed upon the English rural folk conditions of decay and denigration. But this phase was comparatively short in its duration for the expanding industries eventually gave employment to the displaced rural people and brought them a higher standard of life. In India the expansion of industries

was of the most rudimentry kind and such industries as were developed could give employment only to an infinitesimal part of the population. The destruction of indigenous industries, as a result of competition from cheap, mass-produced goods, threw the displaced artisans back on to the villages as a consequence of which the pressure of population on agriculture grew incessantly. If there was some extension of land under cultivation it was not of such an order as to provide a means of livelihood to the millions of people dependent upon agriculture. The growth of population further accentuated the difficulties and poverty, with all its consequences, became endemic in rural India.

In the cities, the Indian vision stood dazzled before the military and material achievements of the West. Ancient India had not aimed, as Tagore said, at "attaining power, and it neglected to cultivate to the utmost its capacities, and to organize men for defensive and offensive purposes, for co-operation in the acquisition of wealth for military and political ascendancy" (*Sadhana* or *The Realization of Life*, p. 14). In the depth of the utter humiliation of defeat the Indian spirit began seriously to question the veracity and validity of the experience of a way of life which succumbed to domination so easily. The rationalistic and practical West posed a serious challenge to the mystical and hitherto self-contained East.

This crisis deepened as British power, institutions of political and industrial organization, methods of instruction and education, developed and spread. English education created a class of intellectuals whose first reaction was made manifest in a sense of denial. This, however, soon changed into a passion for getting back to the past which brought in its wake movements of reformation and counter-reformation.

The social and economic bases of urban life were also changing rapidly. The advent of industrialization and urbanization began to weaken the basis of the caste-system. In the changed circumstances of the day the old rule of hereditary occupations could not be followed and the strictly occupational basis of the caste-system was shaken. The rules of eating and drinking, likewise, could not be observed in all their customary strictness. But the two other factors which make the caste-

system what it is today, namely, hereditary membership and endogamous marriages, still persisted. The awakening of the non-Brahmin castes led to a new awareness of caste and numerous educational, housing and credit projects being organized on the basis of caste actually hardened the system in many areas. On the other hand Western education had introduced new and revolutionary ideas in the minds of the youth and these two forces, the force of re-entrenched caste and the force of liberalism and socialistic ideals, characterized the Indian social scene.

II

We have referred to the disintegration of village life in India in the latter half of the 19th and the first few decades of the 20th centuries. The old Indian village comprised three distinct groups : cultivators, officials and artisans. The village life was characterized by self-sufficiency and isolation, relative absence of money and patterns of thought and behaviour regulated by immemorial tradition and custom. This life suffered rapid disintegration from economic competition from machine-made goods, by the administrative centralization under British rule and the consequent loss of local autonomy, by the growth of transport which shattered the isolation of the village, by the introduction of money-economy and the growth of ideas of individualism. The impact of the new economic dispensation led to the commercialization of crops, the dispossession of the old tillers of the soil due to the operation of the new systems of tenure and assessment and a growth in the process of the subdivision of land making most of the holdings uneconomic. The laws of inheritance further accelerated this process and increasing indebtedness and land-hunger made the rural situation explosive. The result was peasant revolts in different parts of India.

The increasing pressure on agriculture is well revealed in figures of *per capita* land for cultivation in acres from 1901 to 1922 which show a decrease from 1.28 to 1.21. If there are too many people dependent on agriculture there are too many cattle on which Indian agriculture is dependent. The

cattle population of India is estimated at 150,000,000. India maintains 67 cattle per 100 acres sown as compared with China's 15 and Japan's six indicating that at least 125 million Indian cattle are uneconomical and superfluous while the country has only 60 million cattle for about 300 million crop-acres—a number wholly inadequate for intensive farming (Mookerji, *Economic Problems of Modern India*, I, p. x). The small holding, the numerous dependents and the primitive methods are all factors which have made Indian agriculture one of the lowest in productive capacity.

Were conditions the same before the British took over the political control of the country? It must be remembered that the period of Indian history from 1100 onwards saw only brief spells of peace which were but intervals between wars, expeditions, raids and forays. Ultimately the costs of all these military adventures were paid by the Indian agriculturist and artisan. Under the Mughals "nearly all parts of the country were nearly self-sufficing in the matter of clothes as well as of food and other requisites" (Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 150). The holdings were small though the pressure on agriculture cannot have been so great as was in later times. The indigenous industries employed a vast number of people and ancilliary occupations were found in the administrative and military services. There were famines and these took a heavy toll of life as the means of transportation were very backward and the only thing which the government could do was to open some free kitchens in the large cities. Very often the provincial governors themselves failed, deliberately or otherwise, to inform the imperial authorities of the impending famine and when imperial help was enlisted it was already too late.

For the British period of Indian history we have some reliable statistics about famines and famine-mortality. Between the period from 1782 and 1943 there were as many as 15 major famines killing more than 26.5 million people. These occurred over different regions of the country and after the initial blunders the administration of relief was regularized and made fairly efficient. The famine code was formed in 1883 and every successive famine found the administration ready to deal with the situation with little loss of time. But the famines produced

devastating effects which were felt in the area over a long period. The famines dispersed the artisan and agrarian population and the loss of cattle was particularly debilitating to the economy. Repeated famines in an area, therefore, meant crippling of the economy even after the immediate scarcity had been tided over. That the lot of the peasant under the Mughal state was not one of particular affluence may be readily accepted but it is doubtful whether his poverty was as grinding as was his fate in later years. One authority asserts that under the Mughals "a relatively large number of producers contributed half their gross income to the support of a relatively small number of economic parasites", that "weavers, naked themselves, toiled to clothe others. Peasants, themselves hungry, toiled to feed the towns and cities. India, taken as a unit, parted with useful commodities in exchange for gold and silver, or in other words, gave bread for stones. Men and women, living from season to season on the verge of hunger, could be contented so long as the supply of food held out; when it failed, as so often it did, their hope of salvation was the slave-trader, and the alternatives were cannibalism, suicide or starvation. The only way of escape from that system lay through an increase in production, coupled with a rising standard of life, but this road was barred effectively by the administrative methods in vogue, which penalized production, and regarded every indication of increased consumption as a signal for fresh extortion," and "the most probable conclusion seems to be that the ordinary cultivator was much worse off than he is today, paying a larger share of his present income to the sleeping partners in his industry, and discouraged from almost every form of enterprise by the uncertainty which clouded the future" (Moreland, *India from Akbar to Aurangzeb*, pp. 303-305, and *India at the Death of Akbar*, p. 138). This is a formidable indictment of indigenous administration in India before the coming of the British and it appears to be far too sweeping. We have evidence of the State sometimes turning bandit, at least as far as the Hindus were concerned, when a Sultan like Alauddin Khilji mulcted his infidel subjects on the slightest sign of affluence! But such rulers were the exception rather than the rule. And if the State had been really

as rapacious as it is made out to be in the statements quoted above it would have been indeed strange for the people through several generations to look back to the benevolence of Akbar as shown in his revenue reforms worked out by Todar Mall. The most reasonable conclusion seems to be that the peasants were by no means rich nor did they suffer chronic and grinding poverty as they later did. If the Mughal nobility was parasitical and did not perform any productive role in society the same may be said of different classes like the Zamindars who were created out of mere rent-collectors by the so-called reforms of Cornwallis, the Permanent Settlement. A part of the explanation of the poverty of the Indian people under British rule may be found in a peculiar combination of several circumstances. As one writer has suggested : "The plunder and exploitation of a subcontinent of nearly two million square miles gave Great Britain an inestimable advantage in the race for supremacy among the European nations, and her position as the controller of the market of a foreign population of three hundred million people gave immense impetus to her industrial development and enabled her to outstrip all competitors in the early years of the nineteenth century. British capitalist imperialism was built upon the basis of the exploitation of India...." (Beauchamp, *British Imperialism in India,* p. 11). And if this is a biased reading of the situation then here is another opinion from a source of obvious probity. Mr. Geoffrey Tyson, a member of the staff of *Capital,* the financial journal from Calcutta, has said: "It has been computed that every fifth man in Great Britain is dependent, either directly or indirectly, on our Indian connection for his livelihood" (see his *Danger in India,* 1932, pp. 65-66). But this perhaps was an inevitable price that India had to pay for her transition to the modern age under foreign domination.

The systems of land tenure also had something to do with the problem of poverty in rural India. The British used a variety of systems in different parts of the country. The most famous of these is the Permanent Settlement introduced by Lord Cornwallis. This was a great and tragic mistake. The administration mistook the rent-collectors for owners of the lands and fixed terms of assessment with them in perpetuity.

The result of this measure was that there came into existence a class of absentee landlords and rentiers who collected vast unearned incomes. Lord Cornwallis perhaps thought that some security of tenure and terms of assessment was essential if the peasants were to show greater interest in cultivation and increase their own production leading to an increased income for the State. What happened was exactly the opposite. The landlords knew exactly how much the State demanded from them but the actual tillers of the soil had no protection against the rapacity of the new Zamindars. These Zamindars extorted high rents from the tenants, paid the fixed dues to the government and fattened on the rest. It also led to the fragmentation of the holdings under cultivation, ceaseless litigation and growth of landless labourers. The landlords lived away in the big cities while the tenants toiled on the farms for extracting a bare pittance from the soil. In other areas the individual (*ryotwari*) and the *malguzari* or unit assessment systems were used for revenue collection but the assessment invariably remained something beyond the powers of the impoverished peasants to pay. The net result of all this was that from 1793 to 1859 the proprietary class grew in riches and strength while the village folk were impoverished. An instance of enhanced assessment comes from the Punjab where the land-revenue during 1847-48 was £820,000 which, within three years of British annexation, jumped to £1,060,000 (R. C. Dutt, *India in the Victorian Age*, p. 90). Again the systems of revenue brought into being a host of intermediary interests between the government and the actual tiller of the soil and these intermediaries rode on the lean backs of the exploited farmer. It was not that the tiller was forgotten, but if there was any interest taken in his welfare such interest was made manifest only after a time when great damage was already done. Various enactments were made from time to time, like the tenancy laws in the provinces, to protect the farmer from illegal exactions and evictions but these, in effect, proved a questionable remedy. The processes of the law, however honourable in their intentions, were either beyond the comprehension of the ignorant peasant or, if at all he understood them, were beyond his financial abilities to use in securing justice for himself and his dependents.

Growth of landlordism and agrarian litigation were almost parallel. The landlord was very often a "parasite, living on his tenants, wasting his substance and corrupting his neighbourhood" (M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitor*, p. 332), while the peasant's condition may be best described in the words of Sir Daniel Hamilton : "The world takes the surplus crops, the *Sowcar* (money-lender) and the trader take the money and the devil takes the people" (The *Calcutta Review*, July, 1916). Thus it happened that "every circumstance which has weakened the economic position of the small holder has increased the supply of agricultural labourers—the subdivision of holdings, the loss of common rights in the rural economy, the disuse of collective enterprise, the multiplication of rent-receivers, free mortgaging and transfer of land and the decline of cottage industries" (Mookerji, *Economic Problems of Modern India*, I, p. 123).

The social composition of the agrarian community also underwent profound changes. India is a land of working peasants rather than of capitalist farmers and the small holdings, methods of subsistence farming and abject dependence on seasonal rains, make the livelihood of these peasants pitifully low. Between 1891 and 1931 the percentage of population dependent on agriculture grew from 61.1 to 75.00 and between the decade 1921-31 the number of agricultural labour increased from 21.7 to 33.5 million. Decreasing land, increasing population and enormous indebtedness characterize the life of rural India. The lowest point has been reached and the condition now is that the peasant has little to lose from a revolution "but his chains". That the peasant has not revolted against such depressing conditions of life and work is a testimony to his patience and the philosophy of life that has given him this patience.

If unemployment and underemployment, indebtedness and penury were the main components of the life of rural India the history of industrialization is one of painful and inadequate growth. It is very often assumed that the poverty of the Indian peasant is due, in a substantial measure, to his primitive methods of cultivation and his strange religious prejudices. These are some of the casual fictions invented to explain sordid poverty. Competent authorities have averred that, in the

given circumstances, the Indian peasant, in his hard work and technical skills, has little to learn from the European or American farmer (see Gadgil, *Industrial Evolution of India*, p. 72). While it cannot be denied that Indian agricultural productivity is low (rice production per acre in India is 240 lb.; in Japan 3,444 lb. and in Italy, 4,568 lb.), the causes for it must be sought more in the circumstances under which the Indian farmer has to work than in any necessary inherent superiority of his colleagues elsewhere. It has been proved that given the incentive and the means the Indian peasant is second to none in his hard work and eagerness to learn new ways. His poverty has conditioned his methods and output. Thus the wide prevalence of rice-cultivation in India can be partly explained by the fact that rice requires the least expenditure of capital, or human labour. Similarly, "the convincing demonstration of the superiority of a heavy iron plough to a cultivator whose bullocks are half-fed and utterly unfit to drag anything heavier than the ordinary wooden plough" would be devoid of all meaning. And it is often argued that religious prejudices act against the development of dairy-farming and cattle-rearing in India. But, as Ghose points out, "In general the yield per acre is higher in arable cultivation than in livestock farming" and in a land where for every acre available for arable cultivation there are two families clamouring for its use for human food there is little purpose in explaining the advantage of letting that land be used for cattle-grazing! As Ghose puts it: "To produce 1,000 calories in the form of milk requires twice to four times as much land as to produce 1,000 calories in the form of wheat or rice" (see his *Pressure of Population and Economic Efficiency in India*, p. 50; and W. R. Aykroyd, "Nutrition", Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs, pp. 20-21). The fact is that the average Indian farmer "is typically a small cultivator, usually unlettered but not unintelligent, eking out his existence in poverty and discomfort on the produce of his few acres. He is generally frugal, but it is not surprising that, living in such straightened circumstances, he finds it difficult to lay up in a good year for the lean years to come" (Eleanor M. Hough, *The Co-operative Movement in India*, p. 5). The Indian farmer thus lives his life under the tyranny of the vicious circle which

ordains that his poverty determine his methods and his methods create his poverty !

What is the answer to this dilemma of the Indian peasantry ? The answer is only this : It is time that the parasitical intermediaries riding on the backs of the Indian peasantry are dislodged from their perches ; it is time that the impossible rural indebtedness is written off and the peasant, once and for all time, is freed from the bondage imposed upon him by the absentee landlord. It is not necessary to work out a bloody revolution to do all this. The work of Acharya Vinoba Bhave in the field of voluntary land-redistribution has shown the peaceful way to achieve an agrarian revolution. In 1948 the Communist Party of India, taking advantage of the deep agrarian discontent, attempted an insurrection in Telangana in Hyderabad State. This insurrection was crushed. But Bhave, a great disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, toured the area to discover what lay beyond the Communist atrocities. During the course of this tour he received a gift of some 300 acres in voluntary donation for redistribution to landless peasants. Wherever he went he appealed to the conscience of the landlords to part with a share of their land for those who had none and the response was amazing. Since 1950 Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan, the Socialist leader who has devoted himself entirely to this *Bhoodan* or Voluntary Land-Redistribution Movement, and many other leaders have succeeded in obtaining as many as 110 million acres of land more than half of which has already been redistributed. Alongside, Bhave has also secured means of cultivation like farm implements and aid for digging wells at many places. This is a veritable revolution which is all the more significant as it is brought about entirely peacefully and by consent. The different State administrations as well as the central government have placed on the statute book laws prescribing a ceiling on acreage which could be held by a farmer and thus made possible the grant of proprietary rights to the peasants. By all tokens it appears that the utter misery and helplessness suffered so long by the peasant are coming to an end and he is now on the threshold of a new age. Political freedom has whetted his appetite for economic changes and the temper of the age is well understood by the leaders and the landlords.

It has often been pointed out that one of the important causes of India's poverty is the abnormal growth of population during the past several decades. It is pointed out that between 1881 and 1931 Indian population rose from 248 million to 338 million and that "an area half that of the United States of America has a population more than twice as great". This enormous population, placed today at 360 million, has an extremely short expectation of life, computed at 25 years—since the gain of freedom and the consequent economic changes it is now believed to have increased by about 10 years within a generation. Analysed in age-groups there is a preponderance of juvenile and adolescent groups over adult and ageing groups. The population is extremely undernourished; in 1932 it was estimated that only 39 per cent of the population was well-nourished, 41 per cent poorly nourished and 20 per cent very badly nourished. In 1944 the Reserve Bank of India estimated a *per capita* annual income of Rs. 65 (or roughly $ 22) in the country as a whole and Rs. 48 (or approximately $ 16) for the rural area. Another estimate placed the *per capita* annual income in U.S. dollars on a comparative basis thus: U.S. 554, U.K. 468, India 34. The daily caloric content of the normal Indian food available to the average people in 1948-49 was estimated at 1,621 while the figures for U.S., Canada, Burma and Japan were 3,128, 3,062, 1,986 and 1,834 respectively. That in such a badly nourished population disease and death should be on constant rampage is not surprising. Malaria alone kills some 3 million people in India annually; it seriously affects the working capacity of some 30 million people every year. The toll taken by T. B. and other diseases is equally staggering. And so the vicious circle of life goes on; more and more people are born with less and less to eat, wear and use. As the numbers increase economic progress lags farther and farther behind. But can the rise in population alone be described as the sole contributory factor making this vicious circle not only possible but very real? It has been argued that between 1891 and 1941 there has been an enormous increase in the Indian population. But between 1870 and 1930 the population of India rose by 31 per cent whereas the population of Europe and Japan, during a comparable period, rose by 60 per cent and 113 per

cent respectively. There is thus little that is abnormal in the rise of the Indian population. On the contrary when the population of England and Wales increased by 23 per cent during 1901-1931 the rate of increase in India was only 20 per cent (see Karve, *Poverty and Population in India*, p. 30). The abnormality, such as it is, lies in the state, potential and actual, of resources available to this population. It is this that creates a serious problem.

We have earlier referred to the process of the commercialization of agriculture which transformed the Indian economy into being an increasingly colonial economy. The establishment of modern means of communication enormously helped this process. These integrated the Indian market as well as internationalized it. The exports rose from over £20 million in 1855 to £137 million in 1910 while the British imports in India jumped from £108,824 in 1813, to £86 million in 1910. Cotton, jute, tea, coffee tobacco and oil-seeds formed the important items of India's export trade while most of the imports were in the form of finished goods from abroad, mostly from the U.K. The American Civil War gave a powerful impetus to cotton cultivation in India for, when the American supply to Britain failed, the price of Indian cotton rose steeply. The growth of internal and international communications facilitated this flow of goods. The opening up of India provided a profitable field for investment by British capital. The Indian entrepreneurial activity was inhibited and hesitant and it was only during the closing period of the age of British control in India that Indian capital became active in the economic development of the country.

The coming of the West to the country led to the establishment of two new forms of industries in India; one was the plantation industry and the other was manufacture carried on through the factories. The earliest plantation industry was indigo, dominated by Britishers. It was a sweated industry and conditions of virtual serfdom and slavery prevailed. The growth of the synthetic dyes industry in Europe led to its decline and ultimate stoppage. Tea was found growing in a wild state in Assam and was first discovered in 1820. The first experimental garden was started in 1835 and from 1852 onwards the progress

of tea plantations was spectacular. The first coffee garden was planted in South India in 1840 and though this industry has an importance of its own, its place in India's international trade has been almost negligible. The first cotton mill in India was started in 1854 and except for short periods of temporary decline, this industry has maintained a steady pace of growth and today India is one of the world's major textile producers. Jute began its career in 1854 and ever since has been one of the major items in India's export trade. The coal industry dates back to 1820 and with iron it holds out the promise of a rich future for the country. But the growth of organized industry has been painfully slow and even after a century of industrial advance it has not been able to give employment to more than five million people.

This slow rate of progress is shown in the growth of urbanization. In the India of old there were three types of towns: places of pilgrimage, centres of royal power and commercial depots on trade routes. Of these the first type remained restricted in its number ; the second suffered decay consequent upon either a shifting of the centre of indigenous power or through total loss of that power ; the third category was highly flexible, and these towns developed as new commercial depots (like Bombay, Calcutta or Madras) opened after the development of India's new international trade. The railways, location of new industries, famines, growth of landless labour and a congregation of the new rich, all these factors deeply influenced the structure of the new towns. Thus the population of Bombay grew from 10,000 to 60,000 in a period of 9 years between 1665 and 1674. Similarly those of Madras and Calcutta grew by leaps and bounds. But these were exceptions. The rate of urbanization was extremely slow and from 1872 to 1921 it rose from 8.72 per cent of the total population to 10.2 per cent only. By 1931 it had risen to 11.0 per cent. Actually, however, the rate shows stagnation for, according to the census of 1891, the percentage of agricultural population in the total population was 61. It then began showing a steady increase; in 1901 it rose to 65.2, in 1911 to 69.8 and in 1921 to 70.9. This stagnation was due to the operation of two opposing factors, namely, the decay of old towns and the growth of new towns. The census figures

for 1950 show that the urban population is 17.3 per cent of the total population. These figures over the decades suggest "an economic stagnation in India" (Gadgil, *Industrial Evolution of India*, p. 147).

A large part of organized industry has been dominated until quite recently by foreign capital, mainly British. This has been due to the special privileges enjoyed by the British capital in India such as guaranteed returns on investment, as in the case of the capital invested in the building of the railway system, or the peculiar situation of Indian economic dependence on Britain. Indian capital formation has been extremely slow and a major part of this capital was invested, over a major period, in commercial rather than industrial activity. The industrial revolution in India has been a one-sided affair ; it was put through by foreign capital and enterprise which developed into strong vested interests. These interests closely controlled the industrial growth of India and were not sympathetic to the national political and economic aspirations. The shyness of Indian capital, the comparative ignorance of Indian resources, the absence of metal industries, the inefficiency of the Indian labour force due to illiteracy, low standard of living and low standard of management, lack of facilities for technical education and scarcity of Indian industrial leaders—all these retarded industrial growth in India. In fact, there was a commercial rather than an industrial revolution in India for the "growth of industries has been taking place very slowly. Whatever little growth there has been is due much more to the growth of commerce than of industry. The industrial city, with the exception of a few like Ahmedabad and Jamshedpur or a few Jute towns on the Hooghly, is almost non-existent in India" (Gadgil, *Op. Cit.*, p. 157).

III

In 1947 came into existence the first popular national government in the history of the country. The political revolution was completed with the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. For the first four years the new government had to direct all its attention to the consolidation of freedom

and the rehabilitation of the displaced people. The Partition of the country was a great political and economic blow to India. With it India lost some of the best irrigated food-producing areas to the new state of Pakistan with whom India's relations have been rather difficult. Partition also brought to India millions of non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan and their rehabilitation demanded all the resources and patience of the new government. But freedom had created new aspirations for quick economic and social change in the minds of the people. The Constitution of the Republic of India created the legal basis for far-reaching social changes. It ignores the caste-system as the basis of social organization and declares that untouchability is abolished. The practice of untouchability and other discriminatory practices has been made a penal offence by several enactments passed by the Indian parliament as well as the State legislatures. The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes have been provided special seats in the legislatures and are offered preferential treatment in the filling of government posts. The extension of the vote to all adults without any reference to income or social status has brought the common man on the political scene and cut the ground from under the caste-system and other hierarchical social institutions. The new State is declared to be a secular State and this has meant the withdrawal of religion from the political arena.

In the economic field there were tremendous problems awaiting solution. The failure of the monsoon rains created a critical food-shortage in 1950 and a large amount of badly needed foreign exchange had to be spent for importing foodgrains from abroad. In this respect generous help was received from the United States and the Commonwealth countries but the situation highlighted the urgent need for planning the economic development of the country. The first concerted effort in this direction was undertaken in the First Five Year Plan which began in 1951 and was completed in 1956. The new government which took over power from British hands was expected by the people to function as a welfare state and the immediate objectives of the Government's Plan for economic development were to raise the standard of living of the people and to reduce the existing inequality of income

between the different sections of the people. The main emphasis of the Plan was on the rehabilitation of agriculture and to lay the foundation for the future expansion of industry. Of the total outlay (approximately $ 4,138 million) 17.5 per cent were allocated to agriculture and community development, 8.1 per cent to irrigation, 12.9 per cent to multipurpose and power projects, 24 per cent to the development of transport and communications, 16.4 per cent for social services and only 8.4 per cent to industry. The investment for the Plan was raised from internal sources—like loans, small savings and taxation, deficit financing—and external aid, a major part of which came from the U.S. The targets of the Plan were self-sufficiency in food, increase in hydro-electric power and laying the groundwork for industrialization. Industry was divided into two broad sectors, public-owned and operated and private. The Government reserved the right of directing the growth of private industry so as to secure the maximum benefit from private industrial enterprise in nation-building tasks. By and large the Plan has been successful in reaching the targets set before it and national income has shown a small though significant rise. The Second Plan which has come into operation is aimed at rapid industrialization specifically with a view to give employment opportunities to some twenty million people. The most vexing problem is that of unemployment and underemployment which is designed to be solved through industrialization on the one hand and rehabilitation of small-scale or cottage industries, on the other.

These Plans are inspired by a political philosophy which may be generally described as democratic socialist. In an underdeveloped country like India the State invariably plays a leading part in bringing about a socio-economic revolution. India is set on achieving something which took the West nearly a century to put through and she has to do it in 25 years if democracy is not to prove a failure in the country. The social and economic changes that are taking place in India are revolutionary in character combining the political features of the French Revolution and the economic content of the Industrial Revolution. The unique feature of the Indian revolution, however, is that it is a non-violent process—a revolution by

consent of the people freely and democratically expressed. The Government is not driving the people; it is the people who are driving the Government forward. Indian society is on the verge of a total transformation and in the last fifty years has taken giant strides forward. In the long history of the country the twentieth century will surely go down as a century of the rebirth of an old society into a young and virile nation.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WAYS TO GODLINESS

I

"INDIA, LIKE ancient Egypt," declares a recent American writer, "is a land saturated with religion ; its people are obsessed with the destiny and status of man in the hereafter" (Wallbank, *India in the New Era*, p. 23). The statement is generally true for perhaps in no other people's life does religion play such a dominant part as in the life of the Indian. India is a land of temples and mosques and for the people the *Sadhu* and the *Faqir* are as important, if not more important, members of the community as others. The role of the religious man, whether Hindu or Muslim, in the life of the community is of vital significance in the making of the Indian *Weltanschauung*. The two dominant religions of India are Hinduism and Islam. But there are also sizable numbers of people following the other great religions of the world like Christianity and Buddhism.

India is the home of Hinduism which is an ancient religion professed by as many as 85 per cent of the population. In its recorded history its roots can be traced back to at least 3,500 years. The beliefs and practices included in its fold are as numerous and varied as are its followers. Its gods and goddesses may be counted in hundreds and the number of sects nestling under its spacious canopy are at least a score. From animism to monism, it displays a wide range of philosophical thought and belief and the ritual commanded by it can be the most elaborate and colourful. In spite of periods of serious threats to its very existence Hinduism has survived through the centuries and its strength today is apparent to any one who cares to see the average Hindu in devotion and action in

innumerable temples scattered across the length and breadth of the vast land.

Superficially viewed, Hinduism lacks all those clearly defined concepts and premises which characterize the other great religions of the world. Unlike other religions Hinduism does not trace its beginning from the mission of a prophet who lived and worked at some historical point. Its sources grew through the centuries and reflect the varying tempers of the times and the stresses to which it has been subjected. Its history has taught it the merit of adaptability and the imperatives of differences of race and culture lent to it a temper of tolerance. A simple definition of Hinduism, as a religion, is extremely difficult if not impossible for Hinduism, in the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan, "is a movement, not a position; a process, not a result; a growing tradition, not a fixed revelation" (*The Hindu View of Life*, p. 129).

Among its sources we may discern at least three distinct layers. The traditional formula in every ritual refers to the *Shruti*, the *Smriti* and the *Puranas*. These form, as it were, the very basis of Hinduism, popular and philosophical. *Shruti* means revealed literature and the term includes the whole of the Vedic literature beginning with the four Vedas (*Rig, Yajur, Sama* and *Atharva*) and ending with the *Upanishads*. *Smriti* means remembered literature, literature which is not specifically of divine origin. The law-codes and the epics are included under the term. The *Puranas* comprise a number of texts many of which are of historical import; but they are also a vast treasure-house of mythology, theology, ritual and philosophy. Like all other religions Hinduism also exists and operates on two levels, the intellectual and the folk levels, and of its sources the *Shrutis* and *Smritis* belong to the former while the *Puranas* are the mainspring of the latter.

Hinduism was born when a synthesis between the religion of the Aryans and the cults of the non-Aryans was worked out. The faith brought by the invading Aryans was one of naturalistic polytheism which, within itself, contained the seeds of monotheism and monism. The Aryans worshipped as many as 33 different gods belonging to the realms of the heavens, mid-air and the earth. In the subsequent synthesis many of

these gods were relegated to the background and only two, both of them minor figures in the Aryan "pantheon", emerged as the most important. These were Brahma the Creator and Vishnu the Preserver or Sustainer of the Universe. Recent researches have revealed the history of Shiva as a deity belonging to the pre-Aryan stratum in the Hindu religion. The Aryans recognized but one female deity, the Goddess of Dawn, who is now conspicuous by her absence in the present-day Hindu pantheon. Her place is taken by a variety of goddesses whose origins go back to a pre-Aryan source, namely, the cult of the Mother-Goddess so widely prevalent all over the ancient East. She appears in many forms such as Parvati, the consort of Shiva, and Laxmi, the consort of Vishnu, to cite the two most outstanding examples. Likewise the ritual of sacrifice, so important and dominant in early Aryan religion, fell into neglect and disuse, and with the introduction of iconic worship a new mode of ritual, drawing its elements from a number of ethnic-cultural strata, was introduced. The articles of common use in Hindu worship may be enumerated as vermilion, turmeric, betel-nut and leaf, water, flowers and lamps. Of these the use of the betel-vine goes back to the proto-Australoid period to which also belongs the introduction of the use of vermilion and turmeric in ritual. To the Mediterranean element may be ascribed the use of flowers and leaves and water and only the burning of lamps may be taken as the survival of the once widely prevalent Aryan rite of fire-worship. The influence of pre-Aryan elements in folk-religion may be traced in other aspects of Hinduism. The cult of tree-worship, and especially of the *Ficus Religiosa,* is believed to have originated with the coming of the Negroid element, while phallic worship is a proto-Australoid contribution. The cults of Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, of cow-worship, of Kumara or Subramanya, represent the Mediterranean elements in Hinduism while another noteworthy concept, that of *avatara* or incarnation of God, may be traced back to the proto-Australoid stratum.

If such are the diverse elements which go into the making of Hinduism is it possible to speak of any fundamental and basic concepts which may be regarded as the very essentials of Hinduism? That Hinduism has survived through the centuries

is no accident of history. Its very variety of beliefs and practices would have been a source of great weakness to it had it not been held together by a framework of certain fundamental and unified ideas. We may state these as the four great concepts of God, soul, *Karma*, and transmigration or rebirth. These form the very basis of Hinduism and in the context of these alone can its theology and cosmogony, ethics and metaphysics, be properly understood. It will be worth our while, therefore, to deal with these four concepts in some detail.

The Hindu is generally described as a polytheist. Superficially the observation may seem to contain some substance, but only superficially. The Hindu certainly worships a host of gods, the most prominent among them being Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna and Rama. The last two began their careers as heroes of the epics and developed into popular deities. There is also an equally large number of goddesses like Laxmi, Uma, Kali and Durga and also a large number of guardian deities whose simple shrines dot the Indian landscape today. But even while worshipping these numerous gods the Hindu is ever conscious of the concept that all these are but manifestations of that Supreme God or Spirit who is One and Non-Dual. He is the *Ishwara*, the Lord, the Creator and Sustainer of this universe, full of benevolence, mercy and love for all his offspring.

If the Hindu tends to be a monotheist, in a qualified sense, in his normal religious understanding, on the intellectual plane he is a convinced monist. To him the Supreme is the *Brahman* and his philosophy is described as *advaita vedanta*, the absolutistic monism as propounded by the great Shankara, or the qualified monism of Ramanuja. *Brahman* is the Cosmic Self, the Supreme Reality, the Unity which lies behind all multiplicity. It is eternal, indestructible, self-existent, the source of all life, all pervasive and perfect. Some *Vedantins*, however, would describe this as the "perfect Personality" (*uttamapurusha*) and according as one attempts to comprehend Him through cognition, emotion or will He appears as the Supreme Knower, the Great Lover or the Perfect Will—in other words as Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva.

If *Brahman* is the Cosmic Self the *Atman* is the Psychic Self. It is the "subject which persists throughout the changes....

It is the simple truth that nothing can destroy. Death does not touch it nor vice dissolve it. Permanence, continuity, unity, eternal activity are its characteristics. It is a world self-complete. There is nothing outside of it to set against it" (Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, I, p. 152). The philosophers of the *Upanishads* arrived at these two concepts almost in a parallel sense in their search for the Ultimate in the subjective and objective worlds. They then went a step further and declared that *Atman* and *Brahman*, the Cosmic and the Psychic Self, were one and the same. This is so admirably stated in the two maxims which appear almost in the nature of refrains in the whole range of thought in the Upanishads. These are : *tat tvam asi* (That thou art) and *aham Brahma asmi* (I am Brahman). With the statement of these lofty principles the superstructure of the religious philosophy of the Hindus was completed.

The other two concepts of *Karma* and rebirth are peculiar to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. *Karma* literally means deed, action. The *Bhagavadgita*, the *Song of the Lord Krishna*, asserts that action is inevitable in existence. At every moment in our life we are performing some *Karma*, some action. Each action produces its own reaction or result and the nature of this result depends upon the moral or immoral nature of the action performed. Hinduism states that man is morally responsible for all his actions and declares that as you sow so shall you reap. It further asserts that it is *Karma* which involves man in existence and driven by his *Karma* "the individual moves from existence to existence. The Hindu thinkers view the world as a stream of happenings, a perpetual flow of events. Change is the characteristic of existence. The human being is a *Samsarin*, the wanderer on the long road of existence, moved by desires, emotions and thoughts. *Karma* has often been misunderstood as a law of predetermination, binding the mind and actions of man in iron chains. But, as has been pointed out, *Karma* is the 'past as determined' implying that the future is only conditioned. The spirit of man gives him freedom within the limits of his nature. Man is not a mere mechanism of instincts. The spirit in him can triumph over automatic forces that try to enslave him." The law of *Karma* further tells us that the individual life is not a term but a series. This series

is called the round of transmigration. A passage in one of the *Upanishads* says that just as a caterpillar moves from leaf to leaf so this self wanders from life to life caught as it is in the vortex of *Karma* which in itself is the result of ignorance, desires and evil tendencies. The only way of release from this round of becoming is to understand the Being and experience Being subjectively as That which one is. Once this Supreme Unity behind all the multiplicity of phenomena is comprehended and subjectively experienced the shackles of desire snap and the individual returns to his pristine nature.

These four concepts have created their own correlates in ethics and the everyday religious behaviour of the Hindu. Concerning his position in the context of his belief in God and soul, on the popular level at least, the Hindu does not differ substantially from the followers of the other great religions of the world. A part of the substance of the doctrine of *Karma* has its parallels elsewhere, as may be seen from the concepts of moral responsibility of man as understood in Christianity and Islam. But it is when this theory of *Karma* is understood in the context of the doctrine of transmigration that Hinduism differs in a marked way from the other religions. This doctrine has conditioned the Hindu view of life and has produced important effects in the moulding of the Hindu *Weltanschauung*. This view of the world comprises two aspects, negative and positive. If the Supreme Reality is Unity then all that which is multiplicity must be unreal and consequently the world of our senses must be looked upon as unreal. This is conveyed by the term *Maya* or illusion which is so frequently used both in the works on philosophy as well as in popular parlance. In the works of philosophy such as those of Shankara, the term is used in the context of the usual idealistic position and as such the concept is not exclusively peculiar to Hindu philosophy. But there is also another sense in which the term is used and this must be duly considered. As Radhakrishnan says : "The eternal need not give way to the temporal as null and void. Loyalty to the highest experience of man, religious and moral, philosophic and aesthetic, requires us to recognize the reality of the temporal as rooted in the eternal, of the finite as subsisting in the infinite, of man as born from God. To deny the contingent and the

individual is to falsify the necessary and the universal" (*Op. Cit.* I, p. 191).

A consideration of the concept of *Maya* or the view that the world of everyday life is an illusion naturally leads one to refer to the oft-repeated charges that Hinduism preaches a pessimistic philosophy and advocates a life of renunciation rather than a life full of purposeful endeavour. These assertions are based on the assumption that the doctrine of *Karma* is a gospel of fatalism. But as Shri Aurobindo, one of the greatest of modern Indian mystics, points out: "The doctrine of reincarnation and *Karma* tells us that the soul has a past which shaped its present birth and existence; it has a future which our present action is shaping; our past has taken and our future will take the form of recurring terrestrial births and *Karma*, our own action, is the power which by its continuity and development as a subjective and objective force determines the whole nature and eventuality of these repeated existences. There is nothing here to deprecate the importance of the present life. On the contrary the doctrine gives it immense vistas and enormously enhances the value of effort and action. The nature of the present act is of an incalculable importance because it determines not only our immediate but our subsequent future" (*The Foundations of Indian Culture*, pp. 82-83). The doctrine of *Karma*, therefore, is intended to be a message of hope and encouragement to ceaseless effort so to create our future by our present action as to help us fulfil the demands of self-realization. And as for pessimism, which subsists in a peripheral capacity, it "is not peculiar to the Indian mind, it has been an element of all developed civilizations. It is the sign of a culture already old, the fruit of a mind which has lived much, experienced much, sounded life and found it full of suffering, sounded joy and achievement and found that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and there is nothing new under the sun or, if there is, its novelty is but of a day" (*Ibid.*, p. 84). And the same may be said of the ascetical spirit for, as Shri Aurobindo states, "there can be no great and complete culture without some element of asceticism in it, for asceticism means self-denial and self-conquest by which man represses his lower impulses and rises to greater heights of his nature. Indian asceticism is not a mourn-

ful gospel of sorrow or a painful mortification of the flesh in morbid penance, but a noble effort towards a higher joy and an absolute possession of the spirit. A great joy of self-conquest, a still joy of inner peace and the powerful joy of a supreme self-exceeding are at the heart of its experience."

The positive aspect of the Hindu view of life is best expressed in the term *ashrama.* It literally means a stage, a period, a condition, and in its derivative secondary sense it is extended to mean a hermitage or a place of exertion. The past being determined and the future only conditioned, Hinduism calls upon its followers to look upon life not in the spirit of fatalistic resignation but as an opportunity for intense striving as a preparation for self-realization. In this sense human life must be lived for the realization of the four ideals of life, namely, *dharma, artha, kama* and *moksha. Dharma* signifies a code of ethical conduct for, Hinduism "insists on a moral life and draws into fellowship all who feel themselves bound to the claims which the moral law or *dharma* makes upon them. Hinduism is not a sect but a fellowship of all who accept the law of right and earnestly seek for the truth" (Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life,* p. 85). The law of *dharma* imposes upon the individual a set of rules to be followed in his relationships, filial, economic, religious and social. It is only when these duties and obligations are properly discharged that the individual may claim certain specific rights. Hinduism asks one to be duty-conscious rather than rights-conscious and consequently insists upon the proper discharge of one's own duties first. The second ideal of *artha* may be rendered as action or conduct conducive to the economic or temporal good of the individual as living in a social group of which he forms an organic but unique part. By the enunciation of this ideal as also of the next, namely, *kama,* Hinduism is brought into a close relationship with the affairs of this world. *Artha* is the economic good and the individual is called upon to work not only that he may be securely placed but also that by his individual endeavour he may help his own society in its search for stability and progress. *Kama* indicates the cultural aspect in the sense that it means the enjoyment of life and in this proves to be a strong corrective to the streak of pessimism and renuncia-

tion referred to earlier. It regulates the relationships between the sexes on the assumption that the life of the flesh, far from being something sinful or harmful in itself, has a necessary and moral function to discharge, if both the individual and society are to live a normal and healthy life. It is in this sense that the nuptial vows in a Hindu marriage require of the bridegroom to avow that he shall not violate the rules of *dharma, artha* and *kama* in his relationships with his spouse. Finally there comes the ideal of *moksha* or salvation which demands of the Hindu that all his endeavours be carried out with this ultimate end in view, that even while he discharges his purely mundane functions he will not be unmindful of the demands of self-realization.

To facilitate the fulfilment of these ideals the ancient Hindu law-givers prescribed that an individual may live his life through the four stages of *brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha* and *sannyasa*. These may be translated as periods of life devoted to study, household duties, contemplation and renunciation. In the first stage man functions as one who learns, in the second he works as one who acts, in the third as one who contemplates and in the fourth as one who realises. The first stage starts after the investiture of the sacred thread, obligatory for the first three castes, performed some time between the ages of 8 and 12. The second commences after marriage ; the third requires that, after retirement from active life, a man with his wife build a hermitage in the forest and spend his time in meditation and contemplation. The fourth means complete renunciation and the assumption of the status of a holy man, living alone and homeless and subsisting on charity. These, however, have largely fallen into disuse today though the ceremonies like the investiture of the sacred thread are still performed. Finally, everyone has to discharge his three obligations or debts as they are called. These are the obligations towards God, towards ancestors and those towards the *Rishis* or culture-creators of the race. The first is discharged by leading a life of morality and piety, the second by leading a correct and upright family life, and the third by constant learning and by developing the intellectual and cultural heritage of the society.

Underlying all these ideas is the concept of *Yajnya* or sacri-

fice, which exerts such a powerful influence on the mind of the Hindu. The roots of this may be traced back to the time when it was believed that the creation of the universe was an act of supreme sacrifice performed by the Cosmic Man (*Purusha*). An active pursuit of this ideal of sacrifice enables us to re-create the great sacrifice of universal creation in our daily life. For this it is enjoined upon every householder that he should offer the five great sacrifies every day. These are the offerings to the gods, to the ancestors, to the *Rishis* or the creators of the cultural traditions of the race, to the stranger at the door and last, but not the least, to all living beings. These are aimed at inculcating in the mind of every individual the three virtues of the spirit of sacrifice (*Yajnya*), of charity (*Dana*) and endeavour (*Tapas*).

On the popular level, however, the understanding of religion and its demands was somewhat different. At a very early stage of its evolution Hinduism developed the theory of the three paths (*margas*) of salvation, namely, *Jnyana*, knowledge; *Bhakti*, devotion to a personal God, and *Karma* or ritual works. For the large masses of the people the first was difficult and they naturally adopted a combination of the next two. The path of works required the performance of certain rituals, worship in a ceremonial manner and pilgrimages to the holy places. *Bhakti* had especially a very strong hold on the popular mind and it became almost the basis of Vaishnavism (worship of Vishnu-Krishna) and Shaivism (worship of Shiva), the two major "sects" of Hinduism. *Bhakti* required no conditions of caste and status in its adherent to worship God; it only demanded a pure heart joined in single-minded devotion to the Lord of the Universe. The *Bhakti* movement produced some of the greatest saints in India such as Kabir, Mirabai, Tukaram, Narsi Mehta and the Alwars of the south, whose names are household words and whose devotional songs are sung by millions every day in all walks of life.

We have already discussed the development of the caste-system and its effects on Indian society. Caste, along with the wholesale assimilation of superstitious social customs, made Hinduism immobile and as the tides of the Islamic invasions advanced orthodoxy became identified with the only repository of Hindu-

ism. What happened during the period of decadence and religious strife was that the lofty philosophy of the *Upanishads* was overlaid with practice of gross superstition and meaningless ritual. After the impact of the West, Hinduism was confronted with a new challenge both from Western science and Christianity. Under such influences began the re-examination of the creed, and Raja Ram Mohun Roy became the prophet of this new Hinduism which sought its basis in the philosophy of the *Upanishads*. Keshab Chandra Sen, Rama Krishna Paramhamsa, Swami Vivekananda, Dayananda Saraswati and others began the crusade for the renaissance of Hindu religion and life. The new movements, like the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj, succeeded in weakening the hold of the dead hand of superstition and worn-out tradition. The caste-system came under an increasingly sustained attack from the intellectuals as well as the religious reformers. The inhuman institution of untouchability created a revolt by those who suffered its inequities. The conscience of the Hindus was challenged by leaders like Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who put the untouchables on the political and social map of India while the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi weakened the defences of Hindu orthodoxy. Great mystics such as Shri Aurobindo and Ramana Maharshi, humanists such as Tagore and philosophers like Radhakrishnan became the prophets and interpreters of this neo-Hinduism which was beginning to shed its shackles like the caste-system and emerging into a new force of national revival. The Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj in a sense embodied two distinct tendencies. The Brahmo Samaj attacked caste and idolatry, crusaded against child-marriage and for widow-remarriage and represented the liberal opinion of the day deeply influenced by Christianity. The Arya Samaj, founded in 1875, by Dayananda Saraswati, rose as a reaction to Christianity and advocated a "back-to-the-*Vedas*" movement. The Arya Samaj did valuable work in the educational and social fields and has numerous followers in northern India. Tagore, in his poems and plays, interpreted the humanism that was, according to him, the core of real Hinduism. He did not advocate renunciation but sang about the "joy of life" in the service of the people and adoration of God. Mahatma Gandhi re-established the place of non-violence in the conduct

of life and in this he was harking back to the tradition of great antiquity. Reference may also be made here to the influence of the Theosophical movement under the leadership of the late Mrs. Annie Besant. This movement rehabilitated the Hindu in his own faith. All these gave Hinduism new direction and opened up new vistas of development.

What is the future of Hinduism ? It is certain that Hinduism will continue to remain the living faith of millions, of the majority of the people of India. Of the four fundamentals of Hinduism given at the outset it may be stated with certainty that they will continue to be living ideas. At present there is discernible a tendency towards indifference among the young educated Hindus towards the observance of their own faith but this may be a temporary phase. There is a tendency to emphasise the positive content of these concepts which will be the living philosophy for the intelligentsia as well as the masses. Of the caste-system, and its attendant evil of untouchability, it may be safely said that their disappearance is only a question of time. Growth of education and social mobility, with the decreasing gap of distance between the regional societies and the caste groups, will gradually weaken the hold of caste and the homogeneous Hindu society is already in the making. As the dead weight of superstition is cast away the old ideals of the unity of all life, of tolerance and insistence that only good means lead to good ends are being re-discovered. The two greatest discoveries have been those of the uniqueness of the individual, the equality of all individuals and the ethical view of society. This is well expressed in the theoretical acceptance—if not always in universal practice—of the equality of two of the most suppressed sections of the Hindu population —women and the depressed classes—with the rest of the followers of Hinduism. The progress made by Hindu women has been truly remarkable and now they are well set on the way to occupying their rightful place in social and religious affairs.

II

Islam is the other important religion of India. Islam burst upon the Indian scene with the fury of a whirlwind with its

new and invigorating message of uncompromising monotheism, hatred of idolatry and superstition, and the brotherhood of man under Islam. Soon after its birth the missionaries of the new faith arrived in India and there were large colonies of Muslims in the south and on the western coast of India long before the armies of Islam invaded the country. The itinerant preachers of Islam, by their sincerity of faith and earnestness in practice, favourably influenced thousands of people and produced important influences on Hinduism. The growing strength of monotheistic ideas in Hinduism in the early centuries of this millennium can be directly traced to the Islamic influences. The peaceful and pursuasive and the forcible and terrorising tendencies operated side by side for some time and both of them added to the number of conversions to Islam in India. After the initial fury was spent there was discovered a common meeting ground between the two faiths and the prophets of this new synthesis were Kabir (A.D. 1440-1518) and Nanak (A.D. 1469-1538), the founder of the Sikh sect. Kabir preached the unity of the two religions in the pursuit of God and such was the success attending his efforts that after his death both Hindus and Muslims claimed him as their own. Islam also produced its own great saints and mystics such as Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti (A.D. 1142-1236), whose tomb at Ajmer is a place of pilgrimage to thousands of Muslims every year, and Nizam-u-Din Auliya (A.D. 1238-1325) who by their devoted lives and inspired teachings created large numbers of followers in India. The Sufis were eclectic Muslims and showed traces of deep influence of the pantheistic ideas of Hinduism.

Islam in India today is divided into two broad sects, the Shi'as and the Sunnis. The differences between the two veer round recognition of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, as the rightful fourth Caliph. The Sunnis are the dominant sect. Besides these there are the Isma'ilis who began their career as an offshoot from the main branch of the Shi'as around A.D. 765. Then there is the small sect of the Bohras whose number may not exceed 5,00,000.

In the Indian environment Islam underwent some significant changes. The institution of saint-worship and the influence of the caste-system, on certain sections of Muslims, are the two

outstanding features of these changes. Like Hinduism Islam also saw various movements of revival in the early 19th century. The most influential of these was the one led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to which we have already referred in the earlier pages as the Aligarh Movement. Its aim was to fight the hold of superstition on the Muslim mind and to encourage the Muslims to take advantage of the new knowledge brought to India by the West. In this the Movement showed great success and the Muslims forged ahead to take their rightful place in Indian life. Of the other movements mention must be made of the Ahmadiya Movement initiated by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who protested against the naturalistic interpretation of Islam as offered by the Aligarh Movement and also repudiated the authority of the orthodox *mullah*. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born at Quadian in the Punjab in 1839. He began his religious mission in 1889 and soon gathered round him numerous followers. He claimed to be the Promised Messiah himself and the sect founded by him is known as the Quadiani.

In the opening decades of the present century Islam in India emerged as a political factor of far-reaching consequences. We have already dealt with this aspect of the movement of religious revival in the rise of the Muslim League and the trend of its politics leading to the partition of the country in 1947. But even after partition as many as 40 million Muslims chose to remain as citizens of the new republic of India. The Muslims in India today constitute the largest single minority but as the problem of religion is withdrawn from the turmoil of politics it is unlikely that the old antagonisms between the Hindus and the Muslims will ever occur again. But there is no doubt that Islam will ever remain a virile and influential creed in India and will play a great cultural role in the future.

III

Legend has it that Christianity was first brought to India by the apostle St. Thomas in the first century A.D. By the 5th century there was a flourishing community of Nestorian Christians (the Syrian Sect) in Cochin. With the coming of the Portuguese earnest efforts at Christian missionary propa-

ganda were made with the patronage of the Portuguese power, and the mission of St. Francis Xavier in the latter half of the 16th century is a significant landmark in the history of the Catholic Church in India. The Jesuit missionaries were prominent in proselytising activities and the Catholic Church gained many adherents in India, especially in the southern parts of the country. The Inquisition was introduced in 1560 and for a time *autos-da-fe* became common.

The Protestant missionary activity began in the early years of the 17th century and by the beginning of the 19th century there were vigorous activities in Bengal. The Serampore missionaries deeply influenced outstanding men like Raja Ram Mohun Roy and thus indirectly helped in initiating reform in Hinduism. The educational efforts of the missionaries produced significant results and the spread of Western education, at least in its incipient stages, was largely due to the Protestant missionary activity. In terms of numbers, however, the Christian missionary effort has not succeeded for even after the passage of some 300 years the number of Christians in India does not exceed 1.5 per cent of the population.

India, perhaps, is the only home of the only sizable surviving community following the ancient religion preached by Zoroaster. They are the Parsis who came to India first in the 8th century. Today the Parsis number a little over 100,000, more than half of whom may be found in the city of Bombay. But despite their small numbers the Parsis have played an outstanding role in Indian industry, business and politics.

The Jains are another small but valuable community in the Indian life. Jainism began its career from the same intellectual and social ferment as gave birth to Buddhism in the 5th century B.C. Vardhamana Mahavira, the historical founder of Jainism was a senior contemporary of the Buddha. Mahavira, like the Buddha, renounced his home in search of salvation. On his Enlightenment he preached his message of purity, simplicity and poverty to the people and won many adherents. It is, however, believed that the roots of Jainism can be traced back some two hundred and fifty years earlier to the prophet Parshvanatha whose vows were elaborated by Mahavira. The Jains—the name is derived from Jina, an epithet of Mahavira,

meaning conqueror—broke up into two groups around 300 B.C. on the question of garments to be possessed and worn by the monks. These two groups are known as the Shwetambaras (white-clothed) and the Digambaras (sky-clothed or naked). This division became final towards the end of the first century A.D.

The Jain sacred literature is preserved in an ancient dialect called the Ardha-magadhi. It was committed to writing in A.D. 454. Jainism, like Buddhism, accepts the concepts of *Karma* and rebirth but, unlike Buddhism, takes a different position on the concept of the soul. The Buddhists deny the existence of the soul while the Jains postulate innumerable souls in varying degrees of spiritual progress. The central features of Jainism are truth, non-possession and non-violence and they, alone among the others, carry the concept of non-violence to its logical conclusion. The Jains are to be found in significant numbers in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Mysore and a few areas of northern India.

It is one of the paradoxes of Indian religious history that Buddhism which originated in India and spread to all of Asia is almost non-existent in the land of its birth today. The Buddhists form less than 0·5 per cent of the population and are found mostly in the hilly tracts of the north-east. Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, started life as an ascetic and ended it as the *Tathagata* (One who has thus fared). His biographies in a connected and complete form are compilations made during later centuries in which historical facts become embellished with mythological fancy. According to the earliest accounts, he was the son of Shuddodana ("Pure Rice"), a Shakya chieftain, of Kapilavastu, situated on the Indo-Nepal border. Gautama was born in the Lumbini forest; seven days after his birth his mother, Maya, died. He was brought up by Mahaprajapati Gautami, his mother's sister who was also his step-mother. It was foretold by the astrologers that Gautama was likely to become an ascetic, and to prevent this his fond parent spared neither riches nor pains to surround him with all manner of luxury. Three palaces were built for his use; one for summer, another for winter and the third for the rainy season. In these palaces Gautama spent his days filled with beauty, music and dance. At a young age he was married to

Yashodhara. Soon Gautama became bored with the happiness that sprawled all around him and was disturbed and restless. Then, on various occasions, while out on pleasure drives, he saw an old man, a sick man, a dead body, and a recluse—sights which he had never seen before. These turned his thoughts from pleasure to the fundamental problems of the here and the hereafter. He resolved to find an answer to the riddle of life and even as news was brought to him that a son was born unto him, his resolve became firm. That very evening, as darkness fell upon the earth, Gautama began his journey in search of light. After having a last glimpse of his new-born son and his wife reposing in peace in the bejewelled chamber, he left the limits of the town. The decisive step was taken and Gautama left behind him the world of men and women, princes and paupers, the smiling and the sad. He was now an ascetic who had exchanged the attire of a prince for the orange robe of a hermit. This was his Great Departure, the subject of countless stories and dramatic representations in the centuries to come. Did he seek an escape from life? To say "yes" is to fail to understand this grand pilgrimage of Gautama. He had withdrawn from life so as to view it better, just as one climbs a hill to get a better view of the surrounding landscape.

As an ascetic the first task Gautama set before himself was to understand life and discover what lay beyond it. For this he was prepared to meet many doctors and hear many an argument. Making an effort in this direction he studied under two teachers in succession. They failed to satisfy him; he turned away from them and practised severe austerities for some time. He discovered that mere austerity was worse than useless. Then, still in search of the Right and in quest of the excellent road to peace beyond compare, he wended his way to the camp-township of Uruvela where he sat under the *Ashwattha* tree in deep contemplation of deliverance. There he reflected on the cause of the all-pervading misery which is *Samsara* (the round of rebirth) and discovered that craving was at the root of it. Ignorance and craving were the fuel by which the passions set the universe aflame, and *Nirvana* was the only escape from this burning house called the world. He

was Enlightened and had found *Nirvana.*

Soon after this event of epoch-making significance Gautama started his career as the Prophet of the New Life that he had discovered. He went about preaching from place to place for 45 years during which he also built up his *Samgha* (monastic organization) into a religious force unique in many respects. Then, at the age of 80, he laid down that last body of his betwixt the twin *Shala* trees at Kushinara and passed away into *Nirvana.* "Decay is inherent in all component things; work out your salvation with diligence," was his last message to his sorrowing disciples who had gathered round his bed. The year was 483 B.C. or 543 according to the orthodox Buddhist tradition.

Thus passed away a magnificent personality. His figure, as revealed by the early records, is that of a person of stately build and royal mein. He had a rich and resonant voice, and there were always on his face a lustre and glory which come of incomparable peace. He was affable and of an equable temper, which was seldom disturbed even at grave provocation. A master of the art of conversation and repartee, he was a ready story-teller, recounting amusing and sarcastic tales surcharged with obvious moral preaching. A fearless critic of priestcraft, he treated the Brahmanic ritual with contempt, if not with pity. Stepping out of the palace he became essentially a man of the people, equally comfortable in a poor shepherd's hut or in the drawing-room of that great banker of Shravasti, Anathapindika. Wandering from hamlet to hamlet and city to city, he spoke to the people in their native tongue and in a manner which they so readily understood. Despising hypocrisy and pitying ignorance and warning against fruitless penance, Gautama preached his Noble Eightfold Path and released great creative forces in the life of India. From his many utterances we see a rational thinker and a confident reformer, a prince turned religious wanderer and a philosopher turned moralist. Living on this earth for a lifetime of 80 years, Gautama ushered in a millennium of moral earnestness, impressive philosophy and great artistic achievements.

Buddhism declares that life, as we understand it and live it, is misery; transcending life is happiness. The theory of

Dependent Origination (*Pratitya Samutpada*) attempts to explain the phenomenon of existence in the manner of cause and effect. *Karma*, it says, is the bond of life; and *Karma* is born of desire which is the offspring of ignorance. To shed ignorance is to understand that all this is misery, its origin, cessation and the way to end it. These are the Four Noble Truths. The Path consists of Right Outlook, Right Aims, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Meditation—in short, a training in *Shila*, *Samadhi* and *Pradnya* (character, mind and intellect). Buddhism accepts the doctrines of *Karma* and rebirth, but holds that there is no warrant for belief in a soul. Buddhism enthroned Reason in the place of Revelation and made man his own maker. If your thoughts are pure and unsullied by passion, ill-will and illusion, and so are your speech and actions, the Buddha declared, you need offer no sacrifice to the gods nor need you go to the Ganges to bathe for which a well in the backyard may do just as well.

Gautama was primarily concerned with man, and not with men with all their classes and castes, social hierarchy and economic privileges. Conduct, and not the accident of birth, he asserted, was the criterion of a man's worth. As far as he was concerned the caste-system was a form of social snobbery. He threw wide open the portals of his order to Brahmins and Shudras alike, and within his *Samgha* there was perfect democracy in aspiration and achievement. This was a tremendous challenge, as much to the emergent Brahmanism as to the Aryan hierarchy, which lived enveloped in a web of rights and privileges. That was the social significance of early Buddhism which created opportunities for learning and self-culture for the masses of the people.

As time passed Buddhism spread all over northern and Western India and under Ashoka's patronage became the dominant religion of the land. Slowly the Buddhist missionaries found their way into the countries of Asia and with them Indian culture was internationalized. But Buddhism itself split into two broad sects, *Theravada* and *Mahayana*. At the different ecclesiastical councils the major texts of Buddhism were compiled. The concept of the Buddha also underwent

significant changes and the cult of the Saviour-Bodhisattva (Future Buddha) became dominant. As *Mahayana* developed and in common with *Vaishnavism* shared the cults of devotion and also evolved a ritual which was later assimilated by Hinduism, the line dividing it from Hinduism became thin. When the monastic centres of Nalanda and the other Buddhist universities were destroyed by the Khilji invader Buddhism disappeared from the surface of Indian religious life and in course of time was assimilated into Hinduism. Thus ended, in India, a mighty movement which, while it lasted, created great philosophy, literature and art, and contributed lasting significance to the making of Indian culture.

IV

Sikhism began as a protest against the ritualism and caste-system of the Hindus. Its founder was Guru Nanak (1469-1538) who preached a monotheistic, equalitarian faith calling upon its followers to live a life of purity and simplicity. He was followed by nine other *Gurus*. The Sikhs began as a sect devoted to mystic quieticism but suffered persecution at the hands of the Muslims. This resulted in a transformation in the nature of the community for, by 1699, the Sikhs became organized into a military community. They were called upon to do five things: never to cut their hair, always to carry the dagger, always to wear drawers and an iron bangle and keep a comb. On the decline of the Mughals the army of the Sikhs under the leadership of Ranjit Singh created a veritable Sikh empire in the Punjab. The two Sikh wars against the British led to the disappearance of this empire by 1849.

The Sikhs are concentrated in the Punjab and formed the backbone of the British-Indian army. They are industrious and intelligent farmers and have always formed a cohesive religious community. At the time of the partition of the country the Sikhs suffered the most as they were driven out of their home-lands and had to trek their uncertain way to India as refugees. Their religious centre is Amritsar where is located the Golden Temple.

Of the religious communities the Jews are the smallest

numbering some 25,000. The earliest Jewish settlements in India, on the western coast of South India, go back to the 5th century A.D. The Jews are mostly engaged in commerce and in the professions and are settled in the large cities.

Finally come some thirteen million people who practise what are called the tribal religions or the animistic cults. Many of the tribes are in a state of acculturation and show deep influences of Hinduism. Christian missionary work in the tribal areas has led to the conversion of many tribal peoples to Christianity.

V

The line dividing religion from philosophy in India through the ages has been very thin indeed. From the time of the *Upanishads* (600 B.C. until A.D. 500) there developed the six systems of philosophy, each of which claimed to be a science of salvation. These systems were the *Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Purva Mimamsa* and *Uttara Mimamsa* or the *Vedanta*. Of these the *Samkhya, Vaisheshika* and *Vedanta* are complete systems of philosophy in their own right, while *Yoga* is a system of self-culture, *Nyaya* is a system of logic, and *Purva Mimamsa* is but a rationalization of the older creed of ritual.

All these systems are characterized by their adherence to a certain method of analysis and presentation. They closely examine the sources of knowledge which they count as three, namely, perception, inference and testimony. Testimony implies "revelation" as contained in the *Vedas*. Not all the systems, however, accept the *Vedas* as an authoritative source of knowledge for the *Samkhya* rejects them. So do the heterodox systems like the materialism of Charvaka and the schools of Buddhism.

The *Samkhya* emerges as a reaction against the idealistic monism of the *Upanishads*. Its founder was Kapila, a thinker who sought to reason in favour not of the unity but of plurality of the phenomenal world. He rejects *Brahman* and with it the concept of Godhead and aims at making his system thoroughly rationalistic and analytical. In order to explain the

universe he postulates the existence of the two uncreated and everlasting entities termed matter (*prakriti*) and soul (*purusha*). Matter is real while soul is not one but an infinite multitude of individual souls. From the primordial matter the universe has evolved. The soul, in itself, is inert but its very presence is responsible for setting primeval matter on its way of evolution. Soul is unchangeable while matter is subject to change. Soul is without attributes, is imperishable and motionless. Matter has three characteristics of being : lightness, illumination or joy (*satva*), movement (*rajas*) and heaviness, obstruction and sloth (*tamas*). These three characteristics (*gunas*) form the substratum of perpetual change during the course of which, however, the characteristics remain constant. When the equilibrium of the three characteristics is disturbed the evolution of primitive matter begins and unconscious primitive matter, affected by the presence of the soul, becomes the subject of evolution. The mere mechanical presence of the soul excites matter to activity and hence a proper knowledge of matter and soul is regarded as the means of salvation.

Closely associated with the *Samkhya* is the *Yoga* system whose founder was Patanjali in the sense that he codified the floating theories of his time and shaped them into a consistent system. It accepts almost all the doctrines of the *Samkhya* system but introduces God (*Ishwara*) who, however, neither creates nor rewards. The true emphasis of the *Yoga* system is on the concentration on thought, a centralization of all activities of the objects of the senses and of thought on *atman* (individual soul). For this a life of asceticism and sense-control becomes essential, and the *Yoga* system, therefore, pays much attention to these.

The *Nyaya* is a system of logic and its reputed founder is Gautama, nicknamed the "eye-footed" (*akshapada*). It enunciates a system of formal logic though it also claims to provide a means of salvation. It holds that the sources of knowledge are four, namely, perception, inference, analogy and credible testimony. Inference is of three types : from cause to effect, from effect to cause, and conclusion. The *Nyaya* syllogism consists of five parts : proposition, cause, exemplification, recapitulation of the cause, and conclusion. The

following may be cited as an example: There is fire on the mountain; For, the mountain smokes; Wherever there is smoke there is fire; The mountain smokes; Therefore, the Mountain is on fire.

With *Nyaya* is associated the *Vaisheshika* system from which *Nyaya* seems to have borrowed considerably in its theory of atoms and the origin of the universe. The founder of the system was Kanada (atom-eater) whose treatise is believed to have been formalized around A.D. 400. He classifies the multifarious things of experience into nine substances like earth, water, fire, air, ether, time and space, soul and the organ of thought. These substances with their attributes constitute the universe. They have distinct properties and enter into diverse relationships. The atoms of earth, water, fire and air are eternal and uncreated. In its view of the universe the system envisages periods of evolution and dissolution when the atoms are grouped and regrouped.

The *Purva-mimamsa* argues that the *Vedas* are eternal and uncreated. The aim of the system is to give a correct interpretation of the Vedic texts dealing with ritual. The system is developed in the *Mimamsadarshana* of Jaimini, its compilation being placed between A.D. 200 and 450.

Of all the systems the *Uttara-Mimamsa* or the *Vedanta* has had the most decisive influence on the evolution of Indian philosophy and religion. Its fundamental concept is expressed in the aphorism : *Tat Tvam Asi* : *Aham Brahma Asmi* (That Thou Art: I Am *Brahman*). As the term implies the *Vedanta* is the culmination of the philosophy of the *Upanishads* and takes for granted the four concepts of *Brahman, Atman, Karma* and rebirth. But if the *Vedanta* asserts that the ultimate Reality is One and a unity how is it that we see many and multiplicity? The answer to this is to be found in *Maya* or illusion or ignorance which so effectively conceals the real unity underlying the apparent diversity. Enveloped in *Maya* the *Atman* is unable to distinguish between itself and its limiting conditions like the body or the sense-organs. *Maya* involves us in the round of rebirth and is the cause of the misery of existence.

The opposite of *Maya* is *Vidya*, knowledge, which leads us to emancipation. It enables the *Atman* to distinguish itself

from its limiting conditions. Knowledge of the real nature of the *Atman* and the *Brahman*, therefore, is emancipation which is but another name for the recognition of the *Atman* as identical with *Brahman*. *Brahman*, however, is of two kinds—the lower and the higher. The higher *Brahman* is attributeless and becomes the lower *Brahman* when attributes are imposed upon it, and when this happens worship acquires justification. Knowledge, says the *Vedantin*, is the path of freedom but knowledge is difficult and the common man can work out his salvation only gradually by first following the path of works.

The best and most remarkable exponent of the *Vedanta* system was the great Shankaracharya (Shankara, the Teacher) who lived in the 8th century A.D. He carried on a polemical campaign in vindication of his theories throughout India and scored a signal triumph over Mandana Mishra. His major works are his commentaries on the *Gita*, the Ten Principal *Upanishads* and the *Brahmasutras*. It was Shankara who is reputed to have decisively refuted Buddhism on the philosophical plane and he is easily the most towering intellect in the whole history of Indian philosophy. His teachings can be summarised in *Brahmam Satyam, Jagan Mithya, Jivo Brahmaiva naparah*: *Brahman* is real, the world is an illusion, the individual self is the same as the Supreme Self.

The *Vedanta* had, besides Shankara, other exponents like Ramanuja who preached a system of qualified monism, Madhva, the advocate of *dvaita* or dualism and others. The influence of the *Vedanta* on Indian religion and philosophy has almost been all-pervasive as it provided the philosophical groundwork for the most diverse attitudes to life and its problems. *Karma*, rebirth, *Atman* and *Brahman* are terms the general sense of which is easily understood even by the lowly and no understanding of Indian thought and attitude to life can be possible without an appreciation of the influence of these concepts.

The systems briefly described above are known as the orthodox systems. There are six other systems of thought which are known as the heterodox systems. They are heterodox in the sense that they unqualifyingly reject the authority of the *Vedas*. Of these one is the system of thorough-going mate-

rialism of Charvaka. This system accepts direct perception as the only valid means of knowledge and consequently rejects God, *Karma*, soul and rebirth. The others are the Jaina system and the four schools of the Buddhist philosophical thought.

The superstructure of Indian philosophy was almost completed with the *Vedanta* in all its varieties. The Middle Ages saw little originality in the development of philosophical thought. Most of the efforts of the leading thinkers of the age were involved in the clarification and amplification of the trends of speculation in the old systems and this was an age of commentaries and commentaries upon commentaries. The rediscovery of the Indian past, during the British period, led to a renewed interest in philosophy and this intellectual revival produced great thinkers like Tagore, Shri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Radhakrishnan.

Rabindranath Tagore is essentially a poet and his approach to religion is through a lyrical mysticism. Born into the tradition of the reformism of the Brahmo Samaj movement, Rabindranath delves deep into the philosophy of the *Upanishads* for the formulation of a satisfying personal creed. For him the pessimistic streak in Hinduism "is a mere pose, either intellectual or sentimental; but life itself is optimistic; it wants to go on. Pessimism is a form of mental dipsomania, it disdains healthy nourishment, indulges in the strong drink of denunciation, and creates an artificial dejection which thirsts for a stronger draught" (*Sadhana*, pp. 52 ff.). He is a poet of joy who sees the presence of the Divine everywhere. For him God does not need the efforts of the priest nor the agency of an image, for the universe is the creation of joy felt by the Creator. This God, furthermore, is Love, and in this Tagore follows the great tradition of *Bhakti* of which the Vaishnava poets, Kabir, Dadu, Mirabai and Tukaram sang so eloquently. He is a firm believer in the gospel of progress and declares that evil must yield place to goodness. For him deliverance is not to be found in a withdrawal from the world and he chides the priests who tell the beads of their rosary in the dim corners of the temple to come out into the sun and find God working with the lowliest and the low in the fields and on the roads. He argues that if God has bound Himself with bonds of love

in His creation how can man seek Him and find Him by searching for an escape from life? It is through suffering that God seeks to draw man unto Himself and "the burden of pain is a gift of God" (Underwood, *Contemporary Thought of India*, p. 175). In Tagore the old pantheism of the *Upanishads* blends with a lyric beauty into a Christian earnestness and in his piety we find a veritable synthesis of all the great religions of the world. Tagore is thus a prophet of the new Hinduism, at once humanistic, mystical and optimistic.

Shri Aurobindo Ghosh began his career with politics and ended it with becoming one of the greatest *Yogis* of modern India. Like Tagore he is a messenger of Joy and in contradistinction to *Maya* (Illusion) he stresses *Lila* (Divine Play). He is much influenced by Shaivism and ideas associated with the mystical cult of *Tantra* and *Shakti*-worship. He preaches the gospel of the Superman which is quite different from that advocated by Nietzsche. The Superman of Aurobindo surrenders completely his individuality and is in total unity with the Supreme Reality; he is the great self-ruler. And whereas the Superman of the Western thought tries to stamp his own finite individuality on the world and fails in the process the Superman of Shri Aurobindo acts simply as an instrument in the hands of the Time-spirit (Raju, *Idealistic Thought of India*, p. 304).

"There is no religion," declared Mahatma Gandhi, "higher than Truth and Righteousness." To him "religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals." Of his personal religion he says that he has "the feeling of an indissoluble bond" with Hinduism. He says: "Nothing elates me so much as the music of the *Gita* or the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas, the only two books in Hinduism I may be said to know. I know the vice that is going on today in all the great Hindu shrines, but I love them in spite of their unspeakable failings. I am a reformer through and through. But my zeal never takes me to the rejection of any of the essential things in Hinduism."

Gandhiji is opposed to the caste-system as it appears today

but accepts the theory of the *Varnas* (hereditary occupational divisions), albeit without any hierarchical implications associated with it. In his thought one may discern the influences of Vaishnavism, of Jainism and of Tolstoy. He is not opposed to the machine though he warns us against the dangers of an acquisitive society based on "machinism." Truth and non-violence, for him, are the two supreme values and to him God "is truth and love, God is ethics and morality. God is fearlessness, God is the source of life and light and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. He transcends speech and reason. He is a personal God to those who need His touch. He is the purest essence. He simply Is to those who have faith. He is long suffering. He is patient, but He is also terrible. He is the greatest democrat the world knows. He is the greatest tyrant ever known. We are *not*, He alone *is*" (See Bose, *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 3). For Gandhi Truth is the Law of the universe "governing everything that exists or lives. It is not a blind law ; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings." This Law is God and the path to reach Him is through utter devotion, total purity and absolute abjuration of violence, whether in thought, word or deed. His *Satyagraha* ("assertion of truth") is based on truth and non-violence which are "no cloistered virtues but applicable as much in the forum and the legislatures as in the market-place." He urges a life of strenuous effort directed to a "deliberate and voluntary restriction of wants", dedicated to the pursuit of Truth through non-violence. In this Mahatma Gandhi reinterprets some of the basic tenets of Hinduism in the light of experience gained through the humiliation of political defeat and felt through the fire of aspiration for freedom, social, economic and cultural.

Dr. Radhakrishnan is a brilliant interpretor of the ancient faith in modern terms. Radhakrishnan concedes that there is much in Hinduism today that must be discarded, and indeed, the sooner the better. He asserts, however, that the shortcomings of Hinduism in the modern world are not inherent in it but accidental to it. He insists that the fundamentals of Hinduism, as made manifest in the *advaita vedanta* (monism), are of timeless validity. Dr. Radhakrishnan strives to emphasise

the positive aspects of the *Vedanta* as propounded by the great Shankara and presents a consistent system of philosophy and ethics. Recognizing the importance of knowledge as a way of salvation he nonetheless points out the primacy of intuition for "intuition is integral experience, intellect is discursive knowledge. Intellect involves the distinction between subject and object; in intuition the two are one (*An Idealist View of Life*, p. 143)." Like Tagore, Radhakrishnan is a mystic but one "who wants to intellectualise the Absolute and treat it as God who is a person, and contends that our intellect cannot understand the Absolute otherwise, though an impersonal Absolute, which is beyond the reach of the intellect and is the object of intuition, is true (Raju, *Idealist Thought of India*, pp. 343-344)." In his interpretation of Hinduism Radhakrishnan has striven to bring out the positive moral content and thinks that a regeneration of Hinduism, on the basis of its age-old fundamental philosophical postulates and spiritual values, is not only possible but imperative.

In this revival of Indian thought there were also other outstanding thinkers and mystics like Dr. Bhagvan Das, J. Krishnamurti and Ramana Maharshi. How far have their thoughts influenced the masses? In general terms it may be said that the masses of people have begun to feel an urge to live a religious life which, in its basic postulates, is in consonance with the demands of the modern age. There is, for instance, the most significant revolt of the depressed classes who refuse to accept a position of permanent inferiority. On the other hand the humanitarian activities of religious orders like the Ramakrishna Mission tend to emphasise the social content and obligations of religion. Religion is thus becoming more socially conscious and refuses to remain restricted to the four corners of the temple or the *obiter dicta* of the priesthood. It is true that the ideas of Vivekananda, Tagore, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and Dr. Bhagvan Das are restricted in their influence to a small circle of intellectuals at present. On the other side the "politicalization" of philosophical and ethical ideas and ideals in the work of Mahatma Gandhi has given them a mass circulation. Among the masses the current of *Bhakti* is as strong as ever and this *Bhakti* is now increasingly

associated in its implications with equalitarian ideas in social matters. If the present age has failed to produce a Chokha Mela (a saint poet belonging to the untouchable class) the millions of others who occupied the same rung of the social ladder are now attempting to do away with the ladder itself and before them the hitherto closed doors of the *sactum sanctorum* stand wide open. The spread of education, however restricted in scope, has further accelerated the tendency by spreading the knowledge of the sacred texts themselves to an ever-widening audience. The sermons of Vinoba Bhave are awakening the dormant masses. The work of generations of social reformers from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Jyotiba Phule (a non-Brahmin reformer from Maharashtra) is giving results and Hinduism is on the threshold of a revival.

The elimination of communal tensions is creating a broad framework within which a grand synthesis of Hinduism and Islam is becoming possible. As religion is withdrawn from the political arena there is a possibility of a genuine and lasting rapprochement between the two creeds which found themselves in antagonism in the recent past. The isolation which ringed Hinduism around is now effectively broken and contact with divergent faiths has awakened a new sense of awareness of the fundamental unity of all religions in their search for God. A revolution is now going on within Hinduism itself. The demand of the age is now for freedom, not only inward freedom but freedom as much within the precincts of the temple as outside in the market-place for all without distinction of caste and social status. It is the demand for the freedom of worship of God as God would have His creation worship Him.

CHAPTER TWELVE

LEARNING AND LITERATURE

I

THERE IS AN old prayer in the *Upanishads* which reads: "Lead me from Darkness to Light; Lead me from untruth to Truth and from death to Immortality." Another aphorism declares that the function of learning is to liberate man. Sayings like these reflect the Indian attitude to knowledge and learning. In the educational processes and methods of a nation are embodied its attitude towards life and its ideas concerning the aims of life. The foregoing pages have dealt with the evolution of government, social and economic life and religious institutions in India. In the following pages an attempt will be made to subject the Indian ideas on education and literature to an analysis through a survey of the growth of the country's educational system and the development of its creative activity.

The education of a child in the ancient times began at the age of four when he was taught the three R's at home. At the age of eight the ceremony of investiture with the sacred thread was performed. Then until the age of twenty the child was supposed to be a student studying at the home of a teacher. The ideals of this system of education were, broadly speaking, two : imparting learning and inculcating a sense of righteousness. It was so designed as to broaden the student's outlook on life, give him enlightenment, sharpen his intellect, and establish his character through the development of his personality. It inculcated in him a sense of reverence for culture and learning, a desire successfully to discharge his responsibilities towards his family, society, ancestors and, above all, his cultural

tradition. In this scheme, of course, religious instruction predominated, but the importance of the other humanistic subjects was not lost sight of.

This process of education was seen at work in the *Gurukulas* ("Teachers' Homes") and in the later universities like Nalanda. The *Gurukulas* gave advanced instruction, for when the child arrived at their portals he had already learnt the three R's at home. In the *Gurukula* he lived under the personal care and guidance of the teacher who was regarded as his spiritual parent. The teacher was expected to possess the highest moral, intellectual and spiritual qualifications. He was expected to reveal the truth as he saw it, without holding anything back. His other qualifications are described as a sense of discretion and ability to impart instruction with understanding and skill.

The student, on his part, was exhorted to show the utmost reverence to the teacher, living his life of studentship fully conforming to the rules of good conduct. Rising early in the morning the student began his day of earnest effort, full of humility, purity and self-control, fully justifying the regard and honour bestowed upon him by his teacher through the gift of knowledge, the greatest gift. The educational session commenced soon after the beginning of the rainy season, and in the earliest times lasted for about six months, from August to February; but when the curriculum became extensive, instruction was given throughout the year. The normal duration of the course was 12 years.

The courses of instruction in these *Gurukulas* included the *Vedas* and *Vedic* literature, grammar, logic and philosophy, and also professional subjects like medicine, the use of weapons, and the science of government in some cases. The methods of instruction involved a judicious use of recitation, demonstration, repetition, memorization, discussion and debate, and practical work, wherever required. There were no formal examinations; the student was allowed to return home only when the teacher was fully satisfied with his progress. But after the termination of the course the scholar was presented to an assembly of learned men who sometimes examined him. The student usually paid a fee at the end of the course and the State and public endowments generously provided for the expenses of the

poor students so that none may be turned back because of poverty. The poor student often worked in the house of the teacher *in lieu* of his fees.

The teacher's house was normally situated within the limits of the town or village where he lived. But sometimes, as the environment of the town or the village was not considered to be sufficiently conducive to earnestness of thought, the teachers often shifted to the forests near by, where, amidst great sylvan beauty and peace, education was carried on in the hermitages. If the teacher was highly renowned for his erudition and piety, many students, from far and near, flocked to him and, in course of time, the simple *Gurukulas* developed into centres of learning or universities. Takshashila (Taxila), in the far north-west, was one such university, the earliest to be described in the literature of ancient India. It was not, strictly speaking, a university in the modern sense of the term for it had no centralized administration laying down conditions of admission, instruction or examination. It was a seat of advanced learning in the sense that some of the most outstanding teachers of the time lived and taught there, each on his own and in his own way. The Buddhist *Jatakas* (Birth Stories of the Buddha) give us interesting information about this seat of learning. The students arrived there at the age of 16 and spent a number of years there learning. There were taught as many as 68 different arts and sciences such as archery and swordsmanship, medicine and surgery. The daily routine began very early in the morning and instruction went on till the time of the midday meal. After lunch there was a period of rest, and the evening was spent in the revision of the work done during the course of the day or in recreation. The students paid their fees to the teacher, mentioned as 500 coins, either at the commencement of the course or at the end. The teachers were assisted by assistant teachers and monitors. On the completion of the course the students spent some time travelling through the country observing the customs and manners of the people, and on returning home demonstrated to their parents and relations whatever they had learnt.

Another centre of learning of those days was Banaras. It was staffed by some of the outstanding students of Takshashila

which functioned from the 7th century B.C. to the 3rd century B.C. and it was only after Takshashila's disappearance that Banaras came into much prominence. In later times it became a great centre of Sanskrit studies and Hindu learning.

During the age of the Imperial Guptas were laid the foundations of Nalanda, the best known university of ancient India. The excavations at the site near Patna in Bihar have confirmed many of the details given in the accounts of the Chinese travellers such as Hiuen Tsang who spent some years there. The university began its career with a small monastery and gradually the generosity of kings saw it expand into a vast complex of libraries, class-rooms and dormitories. It became an international centre as students from Central Asia, Tibet, China, Korea and Java went there to learn. The entrance was through an imposing gate which opened on the great college and eight halls. The revenues from a number of villages in the surrounding areas provided for its expenses.

This was a Mahayana Buddhist university and naturally the students there were all Buddhist monks. As there was always a great rush for admission to Nalanda the rules of entry were very strict. Hiuen Tsang says : " If men of other parts desire to enter and take part in the discussions, the keeper of the gate proposes some hard questions ; many are unable to answer, and retire. One must have studied deeply both old and new (books) before getting admission. Those students therefore, who come here as strangers, have to show their ability by hard discussions; those who fail, compared with those who succeed, are as seven or eight to ten. The other two or three of moderate talent, when they come to discuss in turn in the assembly, are sure to be humbled, and to forfeit their renown."

Nalanda produced some of the best known personalities in the history of later Buddhism. Some of them like Shantarakshita and Padmasambhava went to Tibet as Buddhist missionaries and spread Buddhism in that land. Others like Gunamati and Sthiramati were active in the starting and development of other universities like Valabhi in Saurashtra. Nalanda also inspired other centres of learning like Vikramashila, Odantapuri and Jagaddala in the Bihar-Bengal area.

The administration of Nalanda was controlled by a hierarchy of officials the highest of whom was the *Kulapati* (Chancellor) with the *Pandita* as his deputy. The university had an excellent observatory and a vast library containing thousands of volumes on Mahayana Buddhist philosophy and *Tantra* (a mystical cult which later developed into a special form of Buddhism), grammar and philology, mathematics and astronomy. Though Nalanda was primarily a Buddhist university it also taught the philosophies of other religions like Brahmanism and Jainism. Instruction was imparted through formal lectures, tutorials, discussions and debates.

The universities of Valabhi, Vikramashila, Odantapuri and Jagaddala were modelled closely on the lines of Nalanda. Vikramashila, Odantapuri and Jagaddala had close relations with Tibet and a large number of Tibetan students attended these universities. These universities owed their existence to the munificence of the Maitraka kings of Valabhi and the Pala kings of Bengal. Nalanda began its career in the 6th century A.D.; the others began and flourished during the 7th-12th centuries A.D. Nalanda, Vikramashila, Odantapuri and Jagaddala were destroyed during the invasion by Bakhtyar Khilji at the turn of the 12th century A.D. The invaders massacred the monks, set fire to the libraries and destroyed the buildings. A few of the monks escaped and fled to Nepal and Tibet where a part of the learning of these universities was preserved for posterity through Tibetan translations.

Just as some of the famous Buddhist monasteries developed into great universities, some of the Hindu temples also became important centres of Brahmanical learning. In the 10th and 11th centuries A.D. the temple colleges of Saltogi in the Bijapur district of the Mysore State, the Ennayiram College of South Arcot, the Tirumukkudal and Tiruvorriyur colleges of the Chingleput district and a number of others became great centres of Brahmanical learning and piety. Like the Buddhist universities they too were supported by State and public benefactions. Then the villages donated by the kings to learned Brahmins also functioned as centres of learning. In all these institutions, though the curriculum was predominantly devoted to religion and philosophy, the pursuit of exact sciences like

mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy and medicine and surgery produced some very brilliant results. The great mathematicians like Arya Bhata and Varaha Mihira and Bhaskaracharya were in no sense behind their colleagues and contemporaries in other countries of Asia and Europe and in some respects they were far in advance in their accomplishments. The archaeological antiquities of ancient India, like the cave temples, structural buildings and pillars reveal a very high degree of development of the knowledge and practical use of sciences like architecture, chemistry and metallurgy and the preservation and spread of the knowledge of these disciplines was primarily the work of these centres of learning.

These institutions of higher learning in ancient India were centres of religious and humanistic knowledge. For the occupational and industrial arts and crafts, there was another school at work. Most of the vocations in ancient India came to be organised into guilds at a very early date and occupations were also becoming hereditary. Occupational skill, therefore, was handed down through the generations through the father-son succession or the master-craftsman-apprentice line. For training in the industrial arts the system of apprenticeship was at the service of the community and was practised on the most extensive scale, providing the fullest and finest practical opportunities for occupational training. It sought to preserve the occupational skills and also to develop them through experimentation and innovation. The discipline here was the discipline of the shop and the market-place and the school—that of the hard process of faithful observation and long experience. But it suited admirably the economic *mores* of the times, and if it stratified skill to a certain extent, it also preserved it in an unbroken succession through the centuries. As the potter turned the wheel and the smith hammered on the anvil the apprentice watched the whole process and was gradually given work to do on his own. When he had learnt all about his art or craft he set out on his own, catering to the demands of the local community. Very often his father was his teacher and, in course of time, when age lessened the strength of the senior, the junior was ready to take over and keep the profession going.

It will not be out of place here to point out some of the merits and defects of the system of learning as it developed in ancient India. At the outset it must be admitted that its achievements were of a no mean order. Though devoted, in the main, to the study of religion and philosophy, it encouraged the study of many other intellectual and aesthetic activities like mathematics, astronomy, grammar, poetics and polity. It produced some of the greatest personalities of ancient India; personalities celebrated in the annals of Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. It laid down certain well-defined norms of behaviour and patterns of thought; it strove to build up the personality of the student and inculcate in him a sense of character. It emphasised the values of truth, honesty and integrity. It was the custodian of religion and piety, philosophy and culture, and to it must go the credit of creating and preserving the cultural tradition itself. But its limitations must also be recognised. To the Brahmanical system the rule of caste was the greatest limitation. Education, in the *Vedic* times at least, was open to all members of the Aryan society. The *Shudra*, of course, could hardly even dream of availing himself of the opportunities offered by the system. But, in later times, with the development of the caste-system and growth of the idea that women were inherently inferior, the *Vaishyas* and women must have been also practically excluded from receiving religious and humanistic education. Education thus became the monopoly of the *Brahmin* and *Kshatriya* castes. These two orders formed a small minority which reserved unto itself all the benefits of higher education. The net result was that while the intellectuals reached great heights the masses remained in ignorance. It was only in the Buddhist monasteries, where the rule of caste had no validity, that any one, provided he was so inclined and had the necessary qualifications, was admitted to the order and consequently to the benefits of the Buddhist monastic system of education. It was also the Buddhist monk, as in Burma and Ceylon, who became the village school teacher and undertook the responsibility of the elementary education of the masses of the people. The *Brahmin*, according to the law-codes, was the teacher, but he was not expected to impart instruction to who-

soever came to him. Again, as the systems, both Brahmanical and Buddhist, restricted their scope to religious and ancillary subjects, the industrial arts suffered and whoever practised them came to be looked upon with contempt. There was also a stratification of learning in the priestly schools where there was a tendency to brand every attempt at a different interpretation of the sacred lore as a heresy. Conformism thus became the highest virtue and freedom of thought came to be smothered by orthodoxy. The educational privileges granted to women in the *Vedic* times gradually disappeared and with the *Vaishyas* and *Shudras* they had to suffer illiteracy imposed upon them by the priestly injunctions. The educational systems of the contemporary world, of course, suffered from similar limitations, and taking the picture as a whole we might say that the defects of the system of learning in ancient India, though they were serious, did not outweigh its merits. Its greatest contribution lies in the set of values it fostered and developed.

By A.D. 1100 there was no central political authority in northern India. There now began a period of constant war and invasions. During this period of turmoil the old educational institutions suffered decay and disintegration and when the wrath of the Muslim invaders turned on the temples the institutions of learning associated with them faced total extinction. What remained of the system was but a faint shadow of its former self. Bare survival was then the greatest problem before Hindu learning and, under the circumstances, it is not surprising that there was hardly any progress made. The major part of the educational activity was devoted to the preservation of the sacred texts and the writing of explanatory comments on them. The south was spared these horrors for a considerable period when the ancient system of learning continued with its own work and for a time the south became the greatest repository of Hindu learning. But the brightest period of the educational system of ancient India was already past, in the north as well as the south, and a new system of education was now about to begin its career under a new political patronage.

II

Though the Muslim contact with India began as early as the 8th century A.D.—even earlier in the south-west—it was not until the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi that serious efforts were made to establish the Islamic system of education in India. The history of this system, therefore, properly begins around A.D. 1200. Like the ancient Hindu system the Islamic system was also a product of religious needs and grew in a religious environment. It worked through two characteristic institutions, namely, the *Makhtab* and the *Madrasa*. The *Makhtab* was the school attached to the mosque where the *maulvi* taught the children of the area the three R's. Instruction in the Holy *Quoran* formed the most important part of this system of instruction as its aim was to make the child a good Muslim much more than a learned person. And as the mosques and *Makhtabs* were maintained either at royal expense or through public donations every Muslim child in the area served by them had an opportunity to acquire some elementary education at little or no cost. The *Makhtab*, therefore, had in it the makings of an indigenous universal system of elementary education for the Muslims.

The *Madrasa*, on the other hand, was an institution of higher learning. It was a theological college where a wide variety of subjects was taught and encouragement given to those who showed promise of outstanding intellectual ability. The subjects studied at these institutions were the Holy *Quoran* and the ancient traditions, philosophy, theology, logic, literature and some of the physical sciences. The first such *Madrasa* was established by Muhammad Ghori in 1191. Bakhtiyar Khilji, the conqueror of Bihar and Bengal, utilized a part of his marauding gains on making Ghazni an outstanding centre of learning in Asia. At his court lived Firdausi, the great poet, Unsuri, the linguist, philosopher and scientist, Utbi and Asadi Tusi. In the vicinity of the famous mosque named the "Celestial Bride" the sultan established, as Ferishta says, "a University supplied with a vast collection of curious books in various languages. It contained also a museum of natural curiosities. For the maintenance of this

establishment, he appropriated a large sum of money besides a sufficient fund for the maintenance of the students and proper persons to instruct youths in the arts and sciences." The work of Al Biruni shows the wide range of interest and the depth of scholarship shown by some of the outstanding intellectuals of the times associated with sultans like Mahmud of Ghazni. When Delhi became the capital of the Muslim empire it attracted a large number of outstanding poets, scholars and philosophers who enjoyed the patronage of the Slave Kings, and the sultans of the Khilji and Tughlaq dynasties. Likewise provincial centres like Jaunpur and Bidar also attracted talent and enjoyed royal patronage to learning and literature. Firuz Tughlak according to Ferishta, founded as many as 30 colleges with mosques attached to them. The most prominent of these was the Firuzshahi Madrasa at Firuzabad. It had a "very commodious building embellished with lofty domes and situated in an extensive garden adorned with alleys and avenues and all that human art combined with nature could contribute to make the place fit for meditation. An adjacent tank mirrored in its shiny and placid breast the high and massive house of study standing on its brink" (Law, *Promotion of Learning in India* [during Muhammadan Rule], pp. 60-61). Both the students and teachers lived in the college and had thus a constant opportunity of debate and discussion. The expenses were paid out of state endowments and no pains were spared to make the scholars happy in their pursuit of knowledge. Another noteworthy educational establishment of the period was the college established by Mahmud Gawan, the Bahamani minister of the 15th century A.D. Mahmud Gawan was a learned man and possessed a remarkable library in which he spent almost all of his spare time.

The establishment of the Mughal empire brought much-needed peace and security to large areas in northern India. Babar was a man of cultured disposition but had too short a time at his disposal to show his love of learning and education in India. Humayun was personally interested in literature and astronomy and possessed a good collection of works on the subject. A part of his own mausoleum in Delhi was used as a place of instruction. With Akbar Indian learning

and education saw the advent of a new age of liberal and impartial patronage. He was the first emperor in Muslim history to help the progress of the education not only of the Muslims but also of the Hindus. Of Akbar's special interest in the advancement of the education of the people Abul Fazl writes : " All civilized nations have schools for the education of youth ; but Hindustan is particularly famous for its seminaries.

" The boys are first taught to read the letter of the Persian alphabet separately with the different accents, or marks of punctuation. And His Majesty has ordered, that as soon as they have perfect knowledge of the alphabet, which is generally acquired in two days, they shall be exercised in combinations of two letters ; and after they have learnt those for a week, there is given to them a short line of prose or verse, containing a religious or moral sentiment, wherein those combinations continually occur. They must strive to read these themselves, with a little occasional assistance from the teacher. For some days the master proceeds with a new hemistich, and in a very short time the boys learn to read with fluency. The teacher gives the young scholar four exercises daily, *viz.* the alphabet, the combinations, a new hemistich or distich, and repetition of what he had read before. By this method, what used to take up years, is now accomplished in a few months, to the astonishment of everyone. The sciences are taught in the following order: Morality, arithmetic, accounts, agriculture, geometry, longimetry, astronomy, geomancy, economics, the art of government, physic, logic, natural philosophy, abstract mathematics, divinity and history. The Hindus read the following books on their subjects of learning. Beakarna (*Vyakarana*, grammar), Bedant (*Vedanta*, monistic philosophy) and Patanjal (Patanjali commentary), every one being educated according to his circumstances, or particular views in life. From these regulations the schools have obtained a new form, and the colleges are become the lights and ornaments of the empire (*Ain-i-Akbari*, pp. 192-193)." Not being satisfied with his educational reforms the emperor ordered the establishment of many new institutions for the instruction of his subjects.

As in the earlier ages private efforts considerably supplemented the imperial efforts. Noteworthy in these private efforts were the *madrasas* built by Maham Anaga, Akbar's foster-mother, and Khwaja Mu'in.

The policy of royal patronage to learning so brilliantly exexemplified in Akbar's actions was carried on during the times of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Aurangzeb held in contempt Hindu learning and in its place tried to foster Muslim erudition. Bernier, the French traveller, reports a story which throws a very interesting light on Aurangzeb's views on education. To Aurangzeb came a "quondam teacher", a pensioner of Shah Jahan, in search of recognition of his services he had rendered to the emperor when he was young. Aurangzeb said: "Pray what is your pleasure with me, Mullaji (Monsieur the Doctor)? Do you pretend that I ought to exalt you to the first honours of the State? Let us then examine your title to any mark of distinction. I do not deny you would possess such a title if you had filled my young mind with suitable instruction. Show me a well-educated youth, and I will say that it is doubtful who has the stronger claim to his gratitude, his father or his tutor. But what was the knowledge I derived under your tuition? You taught me that the whole of *Franguistan* (Europe) was no more than some inconsiderable island, of which the most powerful Monarch was formerly the King of *Portugal*, then he of *Holland*, and afterwards the King of *England*.. In regard to the other sovereigns of *Franguistan*, such as the King of *France* and him of *Andalusia*, you told me they resembled our petty Rajas, and that the potentates of *Hinduoustan* eclipsed the glory of all other kings; that they alone *Humayons, Ekbars, Jahan-Guryes*, or *Chah-Jehans;* the Happy, the Great, the Conquerors of the World, and the Kings of the World; and that *Persia, Usbec, Kachguer, Tartary* and *Catay, Pegu, Siam, China* and *Matchine*, trembled at the name of the King of the *Indies*. Admirable geographer! deeply read historian! Was it not incumbent upon my preceptor to make me acquainted with the distinguishing features of every nation of the earth; its resources and strength; its mode of warfare, its manners, religion, form of government, and wherein its interests principally consist; and, by a regular course of his-

torical reading, to render me familiar with the origin of States, their progress and decline; the events, accidents or errors, owing to which such great changes and mighty revolutions, have been effected? Far from having imparted to me a profound and comprehensive knowledge of the history of mankind, scarcely did I learn from you the names of my ancestors, the renowned founders of this empire. You kept me in total ignorance of their lives, of the events which preceded, and the extraordinary talents that enabled them to achieve their extensive conquests. A familiarity with the languages of surrounding nations may be indispensable in a King; but you would teach me to read and write *Arabic;* doubtless conceiving that you placed me under an everlasting obligation for sacrificing so large a portion of time to the study of a language wherein no one can hope to become proficient without ten or twelve years of close application. Forgetting how many important subjects ought to be embraced in the education of a Prince, you acted as if it were chiefly necessary that he should possess great skill in grammar, and such knowledge as belongs to a Doctor of law; and thus did you waste the precious hours of my youth in theory, unprofitable, and never-ending task of learning words!" (*Travels in the Mogul Empire,* ed. Vincent A. Smith, pp. 155-157).

Aurangzeb did everything in his power, in spite of the rather poor opinion he had of his erstwhile teacher, to promote the cause of Islamic learning; he repaired old *madrasas,* supported professors by substantial grants and made substantial provisions for the maintenance of students. His death in 1707 led to a decline in the power of the Mughals and as the decades rolled on Muslim learning began to fall on evil days. But while it prospered the Islamic system of education added greatly to the intellectual enrichment in the country. Great poets like Amir Khusrau, historians like Ziauddin Barani and Abul Fazl, philosophers, artists and scientists produced works of perennial interest. Like the Hindu system of education the Islamic system also suffered from several limitations. It was meant primarily for Muslims who formed a minority in the total population, for with the exception of Akbar no Muslim King made any significant efforts for promotion of Hindu learning. Again the Islamic system was a religious system and its cur-

riculum was dominated by theology and orthodoxy was its watchword. The Muslims had greater contacts with the storehouses of Western knowledge than the ancient Hindus and to that extent their curriculum was certainly broader in its perspective but it remained a static system as Aurangzeb's strictures reproduced above show.

III

With the establishment of the British control over India there began new tendencies in the educational field. At the time of the British conquest the state of education both among the Hindus and the Muslims was generally low. The Hindu institutions taught Sanskrit literature and Hindu religion and philosophy while the *madrasas*, such as functioned with any degree of effectiveness, restricted themselves to imparting instruction in Arabic and Persian and Islamic philosophy and religion. In the initial stages of their rule the British tried to patronize the native systems. Thus in 1781 Warren Hastings established the Calcutta *Madrasa* for the education of Muslim appointees in the courts of law. Jonathan Duncan helped to found the Sanskrit College at Banaras in 1792. The State was not yet committed to the policy of undertaking public instruction as a matter of State responsibility and in those days of war and annexation it had neither the time nor the inclination to do anything more than show occasional patronage to learning in India. It was only in 1813, when Parliament introduced a clause in the Charter of the Company, that any concerted effort was made for the establishment of a regular system of education. This clause which was inspired by Charles Grant and Wilberforce read: "It shall be lawful for the Governor-General in Council to direct that ... a sum of not less than one lakh (1,00,000) rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India." This was a purely recommendatory clause but its implications were of a far-reaching significance. It opened the way for the

controversy between the protagonists of the claims of Oriental learning and those who favoured the diffusion of Western learning through the medium of the English language.

In the meanwhile steady progress was being made in creating a favourable atmosphere for the learning of the English language by the natives of India. In a large measure this was the work of the Christian missionaries. At the turn of the 18th century Charles Grant had forcefully advocated proposals for the introduction of the English language and European science in India "in order to shake the foundations of Hinduism preparatory to Christian conversion" and urged that Christian missionaries be given all facilities to carry on their evangelical activities in the territories annexed by the East India Company (see McCully, *Education and Indian Nationalism*, p. 38). A number of leading Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy had acquired extensive knowledge of the English language and through it become acquainted with Western ideas. In 1818 was founded the Serampore College, under the leadership of William Carey, by the Baptist missionaries. Two years earlier the Hindu College came into existence as a result of private efforts among the Hindus themselves led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and supported by David Hare and Sir Edward Hyde East. On the other side a number of Englishmen took great interest in Oriental learning and the Bengal Asiatic Society was founded under the leadership of Sir William Jones in 1784. The Society gave a great impetus to the process of the re-discovery of India's past and one of the most notable achievements of this process was the decipherment of the ancient Brahmi script by James Princep in 1834.

The inauguration of the administration of Lord William Bentinck marked a new phase in the social and educational policy of the East India Company's government. The battle between the "Orientalists" and the "Anglicists" was approaching its final showdown. The former argued that the clause in the 1813 Charter clearly recommended patronage to native learning. The "Anglicists" were led by Macaulay, who with his characteristic exuberance and penchant for sweeping generalizations countered this plea with the celebrated statement that "a single shelf of a good European library is worth the whole native

literature of India and Arabia" and pleaded that all efforts should now be directed towards the spread of the knowledge of the English language and Western science in India. In 1835 Macaulay wrote that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and the funds appropriated to education would best be employed in English education". Macaulay's advocacy won the day and soon the Government announced that it would follow this policy. Macaulay was working on the assumption that Western knowledge would "filter downwards" through the English educated middle classes to the common people. He assumed that these classes would translate the knowledge and information they had gained from their English education and spread them among the people through the medium of the Indian languages. But the assumption proved to be invalid in practice. The spread of English education, at least for a considerable time, failed to stimulate the growth of Indian literatures and what actually happened was that there was created a class of people who were effectively separated from the masses by the barriers of English and Western thought. This English-educated middle class finally emerged as the standard-bearer of nationalism in India for reasons which have already been indicated in an earlier part of this work.

Once the decision was made steps to implement it were gradually taken. From 1855 onwards the Directorates of Public Education were established in the various provinces and in 1857 were founded the universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. These were modelled on the lines of the University of London and were primarily examining bodies. The work of instruction was carried on in the different colleges affiliated to them and the Government supported both the universities and the colleges with annual subsidies. The foundation of the universities influenced the evolution of secondary education which now became a training ground for entrance to the colleges and the universities. This education was dominated by a liberal arts curriculum in which the study of sciences like Physics, Chemistry, Engineering and Medicine was only of theoretical importance. Most of the students who flocked to the portals

of these institutions were motivated by a desire to so equip themselves with the new education as to get government positions. As the universities were mainly examining bodies and suffered from a chronic shortage of funds they could not become real centres of learning encouraging profound scholarship or great creative effort. But they played a vital social function in opening to the youth of the country a whole new world of ideas of social equality, freedom and nationalism. By 1860 the number of students in the colleges all over India increased to 4,000 while the aggregate of those under instruction at the secondary level was only 200,000. In the succeeding years the lop-sidedness of the Indian educational structure was still further accentuated for the number of students going to the universities increased rapidly while there was no proportionate increase in secondary education and much less in the elementary area. As more and more graduates came out of the universities and the employment opportunities for them remained restricted there was a growth of a class of educated unemployed young men. These young men suffered frustration and became bitterly critical of the government. The rate of progress in vocational and engineering subjects was painfully slow and India soon had a dearth of technicians but a surplus of young men who could quote Shakespeare and Milton and cite volubly the clauses from the law codes.

In spite of its obvious defects the new system of education brought about some revolutionary changes. The English language opened to the Indian mind a unique window from which to look out upon the wide world and absorb the new ideas of nationalism and patriotism. Through English literature the literatures in the Indian languages received new forms of expression and brought into being a whole new *genre* of literary creation. The growth of the idea of individualism may also be traced back to the assimilation of Western influences through the medium of the English language and literature. English shattered the mental isolation in which Indians were wont to live for centuries. English introduced into India the "critical intelligence" of the West and it is noteworthy that the great social reformers from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Gopal

Krishna Gokhale were deeply influenced by all that was best in the Western humanistic and liberal tradition. The revival of Hinduism and the birth of the neo-Hinduism can be adequately understood only in the context of the impact of Western ideas as diffused through the medium of English education. The Aligarh University (founded in 1877) and the Banaras Hindu University became centres of Muslim and Hindu revival of learning both as a result of and reaction to the impact of the West. But if the new system of education, like its prototypes in the past, created a new elite, it left the masses untouched while, if in the old systems there was no barrier of thought and expression between the intellectual leaders and the people, the English system of education created a gulf between the two. In another respect also the English system of education had close similarity with the ancient Hindu and Muslim systems. It is true that the English system did not regard training in engineering, medicine and the industrial arts as socially inferior to an acquisition of a knowledge of the humanistic subjects but the facilities it provided for study in these subjects were too meagre for the advancement of Western scientific education in India. For a considerable period, therefore, the result was that an education in the liberal arts came to dominate the educational field. Thus the ideological co-relates of a modern industrial society were created in the minds of a small minority but the masses, both mentally and economically, remained in the pre-industrial feudal stage.

In one respect, however, the English system of education as sponsored by the British government in India fundamentally differed from the old Hindu and Muslim systems of education. The old systems were essentially religious and were adjuncts of the temple or the mosque. In the initial stages, when the Christian missionaries functioned as the sole important agency of the dissemination of Western knowledge, the religious orientation was strong. But after the Mutiny, when it was the avowed policy of the administration to maintain the posture of religious neutrality, the educational institutions were secularised. The new universities were not built in the shadow of a temple or a mosque. But along with the secularisation of education the British also introduced bureaucratization in the

educational field and very often a civil servant functioning as the Director of Public Instruction supervised the working of the educational institutions in the country. Trained in the bureaucratic mould he could not help treating education as but another departmental matter and this official tutelage stunted the healthy growth of education. Finally the most salient defects of the English system of education were, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, that the system was "based upon foreign culture to the almost entire exclusion of indigenous culture", that it ignored "the culture of the heart and the hand, and confines itself simply to the head" and that "real education is impossible through a foreign medium" (*Young India*, Sept. 1, 1921).

In the twenties and thirties the defects of the English system of education began to attract increasing attention. It was rightly pointed out that it was not a national system of education and efforts were made to establish institutions which were nationalistically orientated. Such were the Gujarat Vidyapeeth sponsored by Mahatma Gandhi and the Tilak Mahavidyalaya of Poona. In Bengal the great poet, Rabindranath Tagore, established a centre of learning at Shantiniketan in Bolpur and this institution became famous not only for its association with him but also as a result of the new curriculum it followed and the new methods of instruction it introduced. Shantiniketan became a centre of Indian renaissance and a galaxy of brilliant painters, scholars and men of letters lived here and contributed richly to the making of modern India. Mahatma Gandhi sponsored the scheme of what is known as "basic education" aimed at a "proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, e.g. hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc." The basic premise in this scheme is that education, in order to be socially and individually satisfying, must involve a curriculum that imparts knowledge not only of theory but also of practice of arts and crafts. It advocates the teaching of handicrafts and through it the dissemination of knowledge to the student. It insists that the student must study in his own indigenous environment for a life that will be an organic part of his community. Its central axiom is that "the whole education should be imparted through some handicraft or industry." The ex-

periment has been successfully carried out in several places and presently enjoys the patronage of the Government of India.

According to the recent figures available the percentage of literacy in India cannot, on the average, be more than twenty. This is the most telling criticism both against the British administration and the English system of education. The English ruled India for over a century and claimed in widely publicized statements and pronouncements that they were there to bring about an improvement in the life and living of the people of India. Theirs, in brief, was a civilizing mission. If that was so then no failure could have been greater than the progress registered in the spread of education of the millions of people of India. Enlightenment through a system of universal primary education was certainly not a part of the *Pax Britannica!*

The advent of freedom brought the problem of education and learning into prominence. The need for a complete change in the system of education has been generally recognized, though no definite steps have been taken to bring it about. Various changes have been suggested both by informed public opinion and by Governmental commissions like the Radhakrishnan Committee on reorganization of education in India whose report was published in 1952-54. There has been an increase in the number of universities and technical institutions as also in the number of secondary and primary schools. The abolition of illiteracy within ten years has been declared to be the primary objective by the Government and is embodied in the Directive Principles of the Constitution. But already some new forces are at work and they are certain to create a new system of national education and learning in the near future.

IV

The history of literature in India faithfully reflects the vicissitudes of life through which the country has passed through the centuries. Like the history of events of a political nature this history also falls into three broad groups. The first one is the period of Sanskrit literature; the second concerns the history of literatures in the main regional languages of India

which began to assume, more or less, their historical form in the mediaeval period, and finally there is the era of modern literature beginning with 1850. In the following lines an attempt will be made to present a survey of the growth of the literature of India through the successive phases.

Sanskrit literature began when the sages of the *Vedic* age began to express their thoughts and sentiments about this world and the next in poetry, the hymns of the *Rig Veda*. But, by and large, the *Vedic* literature is more interested in the problems of the hereafter than of life here and it is only through exceptional hymns like those addressed to Ushas, the Goddess of Dawn, that poetry breaks through the crust of hymnology. The two great epics mark the next milestone on the long road of literary evolution. Of these the *Mahabharata* narrates the story of conflict and war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, two scions of the House of the Bharatas. The epic is voluminous in its contents and is in 18 cantos. But it is more than an epic; it is a stupendous work which treats of matters pertaining to religion, morals, philosophy, and worldly wisdom for millions in the country. The *Ramayana* narrates the life-story of Rama and his wife Sita, the ideal Indian Man and Woman. The story commences with the birth of Rama and then goes on to narrate the great episodes of his exile, the abduction of Sita, by Ravana, the Demon-king of Lanka (Ceylon); her recovery by Rama after a war and Rama's victorious return to Ayodhya, his capital. It is an epic in some 24,000 verses divided into seven parts. Of the two the *Mahabharata* may be regarded as a "folk" epic while the *Ramayana* distinctly belongs to the classical category. Both of them have served as vast storehouses of subject-matter utilized by later classical Sanskrit authors.

It is at this point necessary to explain "Classical Sanskrit literature". As the divergence between the spoken and the literary forms of Sanskrit widened, the latter tended to become more and more complex and hieratic in its rules and ornate in its composition. Its use became restricted to the higher classes, the elite, while for the masses of the people the *Prakrits* (dialects) were the media of intercommunication. Classical Sanskrit is the language of great works like those of

Kalidasa, more or less conforming to the rules of grammar as laid down by the grammarian Panini and elaborated by commentators like Patanjali. In this literature, verse takes precedence over prose and both are characterized by their ornate style. Sanskrit means polished, urbane, as against Prakrit, the natural speech of the people. The Prakrits, being the common spoken languages, show a certain spontaneity which is lost in Classical Sanskrit and which is sought to be made up by refinement and delicacy. There are no variations of dialect in Classical Sanskrit which "stands effectively under the control of Panini and his followers, to whose rules it endeavours to make the tradition, inherited from the epic, comply as far as practicable". It is this form that becomes the common mode of expression for literary composition and slowly displaces the Prakrits even in the inscriptions.

Perhaps the works of Bhasa are the earliest in the Classical Sanskrit tradition. The dramas of Bhasa, which are 13 in number, were discovered in Trivandrum in 1909. Their themes are taken from historical events, stories from the epics, and two are fictional. These dramas show great skill in characterization, an intimate knowledge of society, and are written in a language elegant and easy in its flow. By about the first century A.D. the great poet Ashvaghosha makes his appearance. He was a Buddhist and naturally essays Buddhist themes. His epic on the life of the Buddha, *Buddhacharita,* treats a noble theme in noble language. His other works are an epic on the life and spiritual adventures of the Buddha's kinsman Nanda and his beautiful wife Sundari. In his poems Ashvaghosha shows a mastery over the classical poetical style and a wide knowledge of philosophy and literature. But he was also a dramatist, as the fragments of his dramas discovered in Central Asia show. Simplicity of language and elegance of diction render even some of the most abstruse concepts of Buddhism easy to understand in the works of Ashvaghosha.

With Kalidasa the Classical Sanskrit literature reaches its zenith, expressing as it does great ideas in noble language. Kalidasa is described as the foremost of poets and there is none equal to him in the use of simile and metaphor. Very

little of an authentic nature is known about his life and there is also a great deal of uncertainty about the time when he lived and worked. It is generally believed that he lived in the Gupta age though there is a section of Indian scholars who would place him much earlier, in the first century B.C. From what we know of him from his work he was certainly a very learned man with cultivated, aesthetic tastes, widely travelled, with a deep knowledge of human nature in all its moods. He delights in his descriptions of nature, and of philosophy, mythology and literature he shows a profound knowledge. His works are seven in number, four of which are poetical and the rest dramas. The poetical works are: "On Seasons" (*Ritusamhara*), the "Cloud-Messenger" (*Meghaduta*), "The Birth of Kumara, the Son of Shiva" (*Kumarasambhava*) and the "Chronicle of Raghu" (*Raghuvamsha*). The theme of the poem "On Seasons", the passage of the seasons through the year, is treated in 153 stanzas. Nature is described in all her varying moods, and the effects of these on young men and women is most delightfully described. To the lover, the glow of the summer sun is painful and it is only when the darkness descends and the moon shines that consolation comes. The wild and rushing streams of the rainy season, the trees and creepers in the autumn and winter, the evening breeze and the first touch of the spring making the whole world keen, are described with evident delight, and though the effort is rather amateurish the profound sympathy with nature is unmistakable.

In the "Cloud-Messenger", the poet describes in measured words and touching scenes the pangs of separation suffered by a *Yaksha* (a semi-divine being) who was exiled from his home in Alaka, in the Himalayas, to Ramagiri in Central India. With the advent of the rainy season the Yaksha espies a cloud and promptly requests it to carry a message to his beloved. The cloud-messenger is then given a description of the route it has to traverse in its journey to the Himalayas, and in lines of indescribable beauty and haunting melody, through words chosen with the utmost skill and elegance, the entire landscape unfolds itself. Rivers and mountains, towns and hamlets, stand transfigured as images of the greatest loveliness, as Kalidasa

charges each word with emotion and allusion in his descriptions of these. The poem is thus "a masterpiece of the description of the deepest, yet most tender, affection, in which passion is purified and ennobled. The power of description of nature, foreshadowed in the *Ritusamhara,* is here seen heightened and more brilliant, as a result of the human emotion which pervades the poem."

In the "Birth of Kumara" the poet essays an almost impossible task and succeeds admirably in accomplishing it. The theme is no ordinary one, as it deals with the love of sport of the gods. Great restraint and skill alone can save such a poem from becoming either flippant or boring, and the poet's great qualities are revealed to the best advantage in this work. It deals with the courtship of Parvati and her marriage to Shiva. Of this union is born Kumara who destroys the demon Taraka who was a threat to the gods themselves. The description of the Himalayas in this work is unsurpassed in its beauty. In the "Chronicle of Raghu" Kalidasa takes the ancient theme of the glory of the House of Rama and adorns it with his poetic genius. It is a great epic against a vast canvas and gives the poet the greatest scope for the display of his special talents.

The classical style, it has been aptly stated, "unquestionably attains in Kalidasa its highest pitch, for in him the sentiment predominates over the ornaments which serve to enhance it, instead of overwhelming it. Sentiment with him is the soul of poetry, and fond as he is of the beauty due to the use of figures, he refrains from sacrificing his main purpose in the search for effect." In Kalidasa's poetical works there is a unique combination of knowledge and inspiration, artistry and sincerity, matchless metaphor and faultless diction. Every work of his is a veritable testament of a genius who, though conscious of his power, was supreme in his humility.

Of his dramas the earliest is the *Malavikagnimitra* which has for its subject the love of the Shunga king Agnimitra for Malavika, a Vidarbha princess who lives *incognito* at the king's court. This drama in five acts shows the "prentice" hand of Kalidasa and is rather involved in construction. *Vikrama-Urvashi,* "one of Kalidasa's finest plays," has for its theme the love of king Vikrama for the celestial nymph Urvashi. In

Shakuntala, the dramatist rises to the height of his powers. In its seven acts the play unfolds the story of King Dushyanta and Shakuntala, the daughter of the celestial dancer Menaka, brought up in the hermitage of the sage Kanva. Dushyanta secretly marries her and leaves with her his signet-ring before returning to his capital. But he suffers from the effects of a curse by which he loses his memory of the incident and when Shakuntala comes to meet him in his court he rejects her as a designing beggar. And Shakuntala is unable to produce the signet-ring as proof of her statements for the ring is lost and swallowed by a fish. A fisherman catches this fish and produces the ring in the court when Dushyanta remembers the whole romantic episode and breaks down in remorse. Finally the two are united and live happily ever afterwards. In this play the masterhand of Kalidasa is seen at work in every act. The whole range of human emotions is included in its ambit and the play is a part of the great literature of the world.

As Kalidasa lays down his pen after a brilliant display of his poetical and dramatic talents the best in Sanskrit literature is already accomplished. He creates such high norms of literary achievement that his successors, however eminent in their own right, fall far short of them. As the years pass, the Classical Sanskrit style becomes heavy with ponderous metaphors and involved constructions, under the weight of which the spirit of poesy lies smothered. Poetry and pedantry come dangerously close to each other in the critical estimation of the later ages and decadence slowly spreads its shadow. Imitation becomes the vogue and the loftiness of the spirit yields place to verbal brilliance.

From the 6th to the 10th centuries A.D. Sanskrit literature was enriched by the works of Bharavi, Bana, Harsha, Vishakadatta, Magha, Bhartrihari and Bhavabhuti. Bana's *Harshacharita* ("Life of Harsha") is of singular interest, being perhaps the sole example of a historical biography of an eminent ruler of ancient India. Vishakadatta's *Mudrarakshasa* is noteworthy for its interesting theme dealing with the dynastic revolution worked out by Chandragupta Maurya with the help of his Brahmin friend Kautilya. Another well-made play is *Mrichhakatika* ("The Little Clay Cart") of Shudraka which has for its

subject the love of a poor Brahmin, Charudatta, for the beautiful courtesan, Vasantasena.

Ancient India also produced a voluminous literature of folk-tales. The Buddhist *Jatakas*—stories narrating incidents from the past lives of the Buddha—is a great storehouse of fable and contains a wealth of information on the social, economic and religious conditions of India during the 7th century B.C. The *Kathasaritsagara*, the *Panchatantra*, the *Hitopadesha* are well-known collections of folk tales, full of quaint humour, intimate glimpses of the variety of human motivations and actions and obvious moral overtones.

Of works on the different sciences like medicine, mathematics architecture, sculpture and dramaturgy we have a long list. These works codify the rules of practice and procedure and marshal a wide range of theoretical information and are of great interest for a study of the development of these sciences in India. The *Natyashastra* of Bharata, for instance, is indispensable for the proper understanding of the art of the drama in ancient India. The work gives detailed instructions on the layout of the theatre and rules of production and acting. According to it, the standard theatre was a rectangular building measuring 96 ft. in length and 48 ft. in breadth. This was subdivided into two equal parts one of which was the auditorium (48 ft. square). The front stage measured 12 ft. by 24 ft., the back stage 12 ft. by 48 ft. and the green-room 24 ft. by 48 ft. The full stage included both the front and the back stage. Bharata emphasizes the importance of proper decorations and says : "The front part of the stage ought to be built of wood and should be richly decorated with wooden carvings of water-pots, flags and images of damsels. It should also be hung with garlands and furnished with ornamental arches. The lower end of the stage must be white, plastered and rendered smooth and the platform must on no account be slippery. For the background of the stage, six wooden blocks must be erected. The intermediate space must be filled with very fine black earth in the shape of the back of a tortoise. This earth should have the lustre of a mirror. In the centre of this back wall and on all the walls of the theatre pictures of lions, elephants, caves, mountains, cities and flower-groves should be

painted." The seats in the auditorium were required to be arranged in the manner of a ladder and the maximum seating capacity seems to be over 1,000 persons. The grounds to the east of the stage were reserved for the royalty; Brahmins, learned men and critics and reviewers sat on the south and the royal staff sat close to the stage on the north.

Equally great attention was paid to the art of acting. The *Natyadarpana* ("Mirror of Gestures") classifies acting according to gestures involving the use of the different parts of the body. Hands, fingers, feet, neck, shoulders, chest, nose, lips, eyes, eye-brows and chin—all had important parts to play in these gestures which were extremely hieratic and conveyed a rich imagery developed through dance and drama through the centuries. In fact dance formed an organic part of the drama and to this was added music.

The other works deal with town-planning and iconography, metallurgy and chemistry, *materia medica* and astronomy. The law-codes formed another branch of literature. The most prominent of these codes were the codes of Manu, Yajnyavalkya, Gautama, Vishnu and Narada. These set out the civil and criminal laws of the country and have detailed sections dealing with property, inheritance, duties of the castes, duties of kings and subjects. We have already referred to the Science of Polity ascribed to Kautilya. Another work on the same subject is the work of Shukra.

V

The decline of Sanskrit literature began with the political eclipse of the Hindu powers on the advent of Islam. A few remarkable poems like Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda* (on the sport of Krishna and his beloved Radha) and the *Champus* (mixed prose and verse) were written and among the dramatic works mention may be made of *Lalita Vigraharaja* and other compositions. In the philosophical and legal fields the tendency was to compile commentaries rather than produce anything original. The exception was in the case of Ramanuja who expounded his particular interpretation of the *Vedanta*. But all this was no more than the flicker of a dying flame.

But if Sanskrit was becoming the monopoly of small learned circles the new languages of India were coming into a vigorous existence. The Prakrits of old were now developing into Hindi, Vraja, Bengali, Marathi, and Gujarati while in the south the Dravidian languages like Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam and Tamil were coming into their own. The Vijayanagara kings were great patrons of Dravidian literatures and a number of works in these languages were composed. The works of Amir Khusrau, Chandbardai, Jagnayak and Baba Gorakhnath prepared the ground for the rise of the great poet Tulsidas who composed his *Ramayana* which ranks almost equal in estimation with the original Sanskrit epic. Tulsidas was a contemporary of the great Akbar and his figure dominates the whole range of Hindi literature. In Marathi the works of Tukaram, Namdev and Dnyaneshwara were an indication of the maturity of that language as a medium of expression of lyric beauty as well as philosophical profundity. In the meanwhile a new language was in the making, namely, Urdu or Hindustani which freely drew upon the two distinct heritages of Sanskrit and Persian for its vocabulary. The Muslim kings and the Mughals patronized literary men learned in Persian and Arabic. Amir Khusrau, the imperial poet-laureate under the Khiljis and Tughlaqs, is rightly described as a "parrot of Hindustani" and his works possess great interest today. Likewise, his contemporary Mir Hasan Dehlavi was a poet of no mean order. Babar himself was an excellent poet in his own Turki language and Humayun could also compose elegant verses. Almost every sultan prided on having around him poets, historians, philosophers and astronomers, and a learned or talented man could always find a rich patron. The output of verse and prose works was enormous and a considerable part of it was of high quality. But it was a most fruitful period for historical writing and we have the chronicles of Barani, Shams Shiraz Afif, Yahya bin Abdulla, Jauhar, Mulla Daud, Abul Fazal, Badaoni, Fazi Sarhindi, Abdul Hamid Lahori and a host of others, which are excellent sources of the history of the period. There was also considerable activity devoted to translations of Sanskrit works in Persian and Arabic encouraged by some of the Muslim Sultans and the Mughal emperors. In Hindi literature the

Padmavat of Malik Muhammad Jayasi, who lived in the time of Sher Shah, is an interesting though highly florid poetical composition. The songs of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan still possess a charm reflecting as they do human wisdom and experience valid for all time. The blind singer Surdas, the Braj poet, is a legendary figure whose songs still thrill millions of hearts all over India. And of course the *Ramcharitmanas* of the great Tulsidas is read and sung in thousands of hamlets all over northern India and provides the masses with an ever-living spring of spiritual inspiration and satisfaction. The other stars in the galaxy of Hindi poesy were Keshava, Sundar Senapati and Bhushan who sang the immortal deeds of gods and men.

VI

The closing decades of the 18th century saw the growth of two powerful instruments which revolutionized the literature and the extent of its scope. Of these the printing press was one and the other was journalism. The first newspaper in India was started by an Englishman named Hicky and was called the *Bengal Gazette*. This was in 1780. The first purely Indian printing press was founded at Agra in 1803. These printing presses began turning out publications by the hundreds. In this activity, as well as in journalism, the Christian missionaries were prominent. The *Samachar Darpan*, a Bengali periodical, first appeared in 1818 and was a publication of the Serampore missionaries. By 1823 there were four newspapers published in Calcutta alone : two in Bengali and two in Persian. By 1831 Prasanna Kumar Tagore's *Reformer* began to appear and function as an "opposition" paper. The progress of journalism in India was rapid and by 1879 there were 20 newspapers published in English and over 200 in the Indian languages. These papers showed a tendency to be increasingly critical of governmental actions and Lord Lytton, by his Vernacular Press Act of 1878, tried to stifle their criticism by laying down several conditions regulating the press. But the outburst against it was so severe that it had to be repealed in 1882.

Journalism and Western literature exerted a profound influence on the development of literatures in the modern Indian languages. Journalism helped the evolution of a prose style which was expressive enough to convey new and complex ideas and dignified enough to command attention and respect. Prose, in the old times, was almost a neglected branch of literary activity as poetry held the place of pride. The growth of journalism corrected this imbalance. As it dealt with current events and new ideas the prose style had to develop an extensive vocabulary and this led to the enrichment of the languages of modern India. While journalism revolutionized the prose style the printing press secured an enormous extension in the areas which literature could now reach. Though it began its career with the printing of Christian religious literature the printing press, through journalism, became a mighty instrument for the organization of public opinion and the development of literature.

The influence of English literature was equally far-reaching. In the old Indian literature the forms of literary expression were restricted to poetry, drama and the folk-tale. The prose literature consisted mainly of works on biography, law, sciences and history and the *Kadambari* of Bana was rather exceptional as fiction. The new Indian literatures that grew up, consequent upon the western impact, borrowed extensively all the forms of expression beginning with personal poetry to the short story and the short essay. The introduction of the personal element was the most revolutionary departure in Indian literature of this age. The poetry of old sang of human happiness and sorrow in impersonal terms; for, what we can learn about Kalidasa, his life, his thoughts and feelings can only be by way of inference. The modern Indian poetry is intensely personal and introspective in approach and expression and this departure can be understood only in the context of the Western influence. Similar is the case with fiction and drama and almost every other branch of literary expression. From naturalism to realism and idealism, almost every literary movement in the West produced powerful echoes reflected in Indian literature which became a medium not only of individual expression but also of social realism and regeneration.

The major languages of India are over 14 in number and in each one of them was seen extensive writing in poetry and prose, drama and criticism. It is impossible, within the compass of a section, to deal adequately with all these. The purpose of the following lines will, therefore, be to mark out certain salient tendencies and phases of literary development in some of the Indian languages.

There are a few characteristics of modern Indian literature which we should notice at the outset. The first is the secularization of literature and this parallels a trend of secularization seen in the development of education and learning during the British period. The old literature was, by and large, directly or indirectly, religious in aim or content. In contradistinction to it the modern Indian literature is secular in aim and tone.

Secondly, the evolution of this literature reflects rather closely the changing social moods of India. The immediate effect of the Western impact was felt in the direction of a "sudden extension of mental frontiers and a vast complexity of forms". This sense of exhilaration, however, did not last long. English education opened the portals of knowledge which revealed a new and thrilling world. The ideas of Mill and Spencer, Mazzini and Garibaldi, Ibsen and Shaw, became so much grist to the hungry intellectual mills. But if Western education did this, it also did something more. By its very nature it was restricted in scope and could not develop and reach the masses. Consequently it was an education for and of the middle classes and the literature of the period reflects the hopes and aspirations of the middle class. This middle class, as pointed out elsewhere in this work, was a new class which had no prototype in the past. It was dominated by the intellectuals. For it the West had created "a restless curiosity, a method of scientific inquiry, a vast mass of certain new facts about the material universe, new aims of political life—all, indeed of value, but, as it has often been pointed out, the defect of the modern Western outlook is that all its many values are separate from one another. There is no longer a comprehensive pattern or picture of the nature of man such as is found in other civilizations or existed earlier in Europe.

Thus, in receiving the riches of the West, the Indian surrendered what had been the chief asset of his life, his former clear-cut picture of why the universe existed and what was his role in it" (Guy Wint, *The British in Asia*, p. 69). Finding the present unbearable made the past appear rosy to this new middle class and this reaction is visible alike in religion and in literature and politics. The scale of the social valuation of the past had yielded place to a new set of uncertain values and the self-sufficient society was being replaced by the lonely but acquisitive crowd. In order to maintain a verisimilitude of self-confidence political defeat had to be explained in popularly convincing terms and for this a re-examination of the most vital part of life — religion — had to be undertaken. But already the secularization of life had progressed apace, as an antithesis to which came the rediscovery of the *Vedanta* and the old mystical tradition. The overtones of the neo-Hinduism are clearly perceptible in literature. Beginning with the Hindi poet Bharatendu, this trend develops rapidly through the years and later becomes prominent in another Hindi poet, Maithili Sharan Gupta, in his *Bharat-Bharati* and *Svadesha-Sangeet*. In Marathi it tended to recapture the days of Maratha glory, as the novels of Nath Madhav testify. In Bengal Bankim Chandra Chatterji's *Anandamath* (where the famous anthem *Bande Mataram* appears for the first time), in Gujarat the historical novels of K. M. Munshi (like *Patanani Prabhuta* and *Jaya Somnath*) are examples of this spirit. To a large extent this was an inevitable reaction for, with it, the writers at least found some moorings in a re-assertion of faith in the values of the past, a process necessary for national regeneration. If the Hindu writer referred back to the times of glory under the Mauryas, Guptas and Marathas, the Muslim harked back to the glorious days under the Grand Mughals and pinned his faith on pan-Islamism as a panacea for the ills of the present. The West was described as materialistic and debasing and there was heard the call to go back to the Holy *Quoran* for sustenance for the flagging spirit of the times. The Urdu poet Akbar tried to put out through his poems a gallant effort to stem the advancing tide of Westernization. The great Iqbal sought his utopia in pan-Islamism while in

another respect his poetry expressed a philosophy which was a reaction "against the ascetic ideals of the past, embodied in Sufism or the Vedanta" (Mohammed Sadiq, *Twentieth Century Urdu Literature*, p. 19).

But this trend, if thrilling for some, was not satisfying for others. To them, the past, however brilliant, was not the present and the misery of the present was too real and compelling to be assuaged by a meditation on ancient history. The disintegration of the old society had disclosed the static nature of life lived under it and the age of transition had brought to the surface the appalling poverty and misery of the masses. Political defeat, economic suffering and cultural frustration produced a feeling of despair and induced a sense of loneliness, an intense awareness of *Weltschmerz*. The sense of loneliness is as much conveyed by the Bengali poet Jibanananda as the philosophy of suffering is expressed by the poignant Hindi songs of Mahadevi Varma. Another Hindi poet, Hridayesh, is also a poet "of melancholy and despair" whose poetry gives us "a glimpse of the pessimism of an age, suspended in uncertainty between a world which has almost passed out of existence and one which is not yet formed" (Inder Nath Mandan, *Modern Hindi Literature*, p. 69). Mahadevi Varma, especially, expresses sentiments which echo the philosophy of sorrow as enunciated by the Buddhists and, in many other cases, Vedanta, along with Buddhism, had cast its spell on some aspects of the poetic temper of the age.

Vedanta leads to mysticism. *Karma, Maya* and the Unity of all life are some of the themes skilfully woven in many poems which express acute disappointment with the historic and the immediate. The mysticism of the Hindi poets Sumitranandan Pant and Nirala (especially in his *Gitika*) is a tendency in thought and feeling to protest against the soulless materialism and emotional aridity of the modern world. The mournful numbers which crowd the poetry of the Marathi poet Yashawant belong to the same *genre*.

But the Indian poet was being increasingly drawn into the whorls of social and political changes of his time. In Marathi, Deval's play *Sharada* and in Telugu, Guruzada Apparao's *Kanyashulkam* use the theme of social evils like child-marriages

and dowry both for their effectiveness and as a calculated measure of social awakening. Chatterji's *Anandamath* in Bengali, the Telugu dramas of Srinivasa Rao (*Vizianagarrajya Patanam*) and Duvvuri Rama Reddi (*Kumbharana*) and the Marathi plays of Khadilkar are designed as instruments of political awakening. In Hindi this nascent nationalism is expressed by the Hindi poet Ram Naresh Tripathi (*Milan, Pathika* and *Svapna*) while the Bengali poet Quazi Nazarul Islam, in his nationalistic songs, probes into this fiery nationalism in order to express the tensions felt by his innermost soul and in Marathi the same task is performed by Vinayak. But in the changed situation mere nationalism was not enough and the growth of Socialism in Europe and the Communist capture of power in Russia brought the awareness to some Indian writers that national freedom can assume its full significance only if it acquires a social revolutionary content. The social theme gained an increasing recognition in the works of several writers.

There were two phases in the increasing use of this theme. The first was reformist in the best sense of the term. The Marathi novels of Hari Narayan Apte and the Bengali novels of Sarat Chandra Chatterji become poignant and revealing commentaries on the running sores in Indian society. The great Hindi author Munshi Prem Chand gained immense popularity with the portrayal of the profound agonies and small joys of the peasantry and the army of men trekking long and weary miles in search of a livelihood. Shailajananda Mukhopadhyaya found his themes in the life of the coal workers of Bengal, and Khandekar exposed the misery of the poor people in the beautiful Konkan. But among all Sarat Chandra Chatterji is easily the master both by his superb skill as an effective story-teller and for the fact that "he had reflected, at the right moment and in the right manner, the conflict arising out of the incompatibility of modern life and the framework of old Hindu society" (Buddhadeva Bose, *An Acre of Green Grass*, p. 29).

The second aspect is that of revolt. In this one may see an increasing influence of Marxist thought and ideas. The writer now became a conscious "proletarian" and used the

sonorous cadences of poetry to breathe forth fire of a revolutionary idealism. Faiz Ahmed Faiz's Urdu verse reeked of this violence and the Bengali poet Bishnu Dey became a conscious Marxist in thought and feeling. Makhdum Muhhyuddin of Hyderabad State wrote the new poetry with messianic zeal, and in this trend of writing the writer's aim became not simply to delineate but principally to denounce and rouse. This was carrying Marxism to its logical literary conclusion, and, as one critic noted, "politics, at present, is playing havoc with our literature; writers, even some of the quite reputable ones, seem divided into political camps; and there is brisk and dismal canvassing to recruit and be recruited. An appallingly large number of people has started thinking that it is no longer important that the work should be good; all that matters to them is that it should conform to some particular brand of ideology" (Buddhadeva Bose, *Op. Cit.*, p. 57).

In the development of modern Indian literature three broad themes seem to be at work. These are the theme of disgust, the theme of doubt and the theme of the millennium. Each worked, but failed to satisfy as an adequate instrument to express the tendencies working under the surface of Indian life. The restless curiosity, which is one of the consequences of the Western impact, also led to experimentation in literary form. Everything from the Shakespearean sonnet to *verse libre*, from the Victorian novel of sentimental mush to Socialist Realism, was tried out only to be discarded as inadequate to express a unique Indian experience. The dead weight of classical convention, whether Sanskrit or Persian, was discarded but a new symbolism for a new experience is yet to be properly discovered.

In all this experimentation, avid acceptance and hasty rejection, where does Rabindranath Tagore stand? We have purposely refrained from referring to him so far because he holds a unique position, far different from some of those listed above. Rabindranath Tagore, as a man of letters and culture, stands dominating the Indian literary scene; a kind of benevolent spirit brooding over the imponderables that frighten his contemporaries and compatriots. His gaze may seek the

stars but his feet are firmly planted on the Indian earth. He does not fail to see the "fire of ideas behind the smoke of guns" and he is not bewildered. He declares: "Today the West has opened its doors, and many are the bringers of gifts. They will give and take, they will mingle and co-mingle; we shall not send them back from the universal shores of India." Tagore, as a master spirit, could find no difficulty in progressing from seclusion and despair to a sense of joy and confidence. He is the prophet of humanism and the ultimate benevolence inherent in the scheme of things. To the three themes another may be added. It is the theme of revealing the Man among men. A votary of truth, goodness and beauty, Rabindranath is essentially a transcendentalist preserving in himself the old mystical tradition. But his mysticism is of no retiring and pessimistic variety and his devotion is directed as much towards God as towards humanity. It is in this spirit that he urges his nation to awake "into that haven of freedom" where "the head is held high and the mind is without fear." His *Gitanjali, Gardener, Fruit Gathering* and numerous other works reveal his vision and beautifully express his sense of joy and confidence.

Such have been the travails of the birth of modern Indian literature. From imitation to creation, from delineation to denunciation, and from the expression of the sense of "historical denial" to the enunciation of new values held forth in the being of the new life that was about to begin, the Indian writer has ranged over many and crowded pastures. Political frustration has been eliminated with the advent of freedom and the atmosphere today is one of enthusiasm for new creation. His trials have given the Indian writer a sense of quiet confidence both in his creative ability and the inherent spiritual strength of his people. The exuberance of revolutionary dogma now stands subdued and the awareness is growing that behind the stockades of classes stand men, who, in their uniqueness, will not easily obey the laws of a theoretical dialectic, however rigid they may be. Barring a few avowed "Communistic" writers the Indian writer refuses to commit himself to any "ism" and has come to believe that in order to be "creative" a writer must be honest to himself as well

as to the social and spiritual reality in which his people have their being. He is no longer a mirror but shows signs of developing into a prism reflecting in all its complexity and diversity the problems and significance of Indian life.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ARCHITECTURE AND ARTS

INDIA IS A LAND of great monuments, temples, mosques, mausoleums and palaces. These are the testament of her faith, the embodiment of her beliefs and the expression of her grandeur. Aryan and Dravidian, Hindu and Saracen, pseudo-Greek and stolid British, such are the diverse influences which have moulded the forms of Indian architecture, sculpture and painting. These monuments belong to a long tradition but mere antiquity is not its sole merit. The long range of historical continuity is matched by the profusion of its creation which, in spite of the ravages of nature and man, is truly impressive.

I

Indian architecture begins with the drab utilitarian brick houses of the Indus civilization. Its first phase completes itself with the massive Chola temples. Between these two extremes lies a wide range of monuments inspired by Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. Before we discuss these it is necessary to recognize a few distinguishing characteristics of the art tradition of this ancient period. Indian art, until very recent times, has developed in response to certain definite demands which have been religious, whether primary or ancillary to it. Ancient Indian art, again, has had a very specific orientation, that of the craft, from which it was rarely divorced. The artist (*Shilpin*) considered himself to be essentially a craftsman who created a work of art in the belief that he was rendering a service to his religion and at the same time fulfilling his occupational obligations. As a craftsman he strove to symbolize, through his art, a pattern of the collective

experience. As a craftsman he lived in his work in which individuality becomes a form of vanity. Much of the art of ancient India is anonymous for this reason. The experience expressed through it is universal and archetypal, the experience of Man and not of men.

In this task of interpreting the experience behind experiences, ancient Indian art makes an extensive use of a highly developed symbolism. The language of gestures (*mudras*) is used to bring out suggestion and impart a sense of dynamism to a seemingly inert object. Though religious in motivation, ancient Indian art, again, is seldom parochial and sectarian, and the differences are regional and evolutionary.

The earliest manifestations of the artistic spirit of India come from the remains at Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, the cities of the Indus Valley civilization. Leaving out of account the pictographic seals, we have the bronze dancing girl, and the bull and the monkey figures from Mohenjo Daro as some of the most representative pieces of this art. This art is highly sophisticated with a vigorous naturalism of style, a fine sense of volume, and a sense of humour and delight felt within the pulsating folds of life itself. It shows sufficient maturity of experience and technique to be able to reveal rhythm and movement through matter worked through stylized handling into vigorous figures. The architecture is more of a work-a-day kind and shows complete absence of decoration. The planning is careful and shows a high degree of appreciation of the merits of uniformity, orderliness and usefulness. There is an air of departed prosperity around it but hardly any trace of elegance.

From *circa* 2500 B.C. to 250 B.C. is a long period which is "architecturally an empty show-case". The material of the building being wood no specimen of this long period has survived and it is only with Ashoka that we may take up the thread of the narrative. It was Ashoka who substituted stone for wood. The Mauryan art bursts, as it were, on the scene with a tremendous impact shown both in its technique and material used. The material is sandstone, dexterously worked into huge monoliths, highly polished as if to reflect the elegance of the Mauryan court. Consider the group of pillars set up by

Ashoka (269-236 ? B. C.). They are ten and are distributed as follows : (1) Delhi-Topra, (2) Delhi-Meerath, (3) Allahabad, (4) Lauriya-Araraj, (5) Lauriya-Nandangarh, (6) Rampurva, (7) Sanchi, (8) Sarnath, (9) Rummindei and (10) Nigliva. These pillars were set up over a large area stretching from Sanchi in central India to the Nepal border and were erected at spots associated with Buddhism. These pillars are as much monuments of engineering ability as perfect examples "of the highest skill of the stone-cutter and vehicles of a brilliant display of fine art". If the shafts of these pillars arrest our attention by their height and polish, the capitals with which they are surmounted excite admiration showing as they do animals displaying a vibrant spirit, possessing a majesty all their own and conveying an impression that we are in the presence of a great art. The packed and familiar strength of the Rampurva Bull, the subtle combination of grace, strength and majesty in the Sarnath lions (now adopted as the State Seal of the Government of India), the stately horse and the charming deer, and finally the wheel, suggesting the unchallengeable sovereignty of Righteousness (in which form it figures on the national flag of India), though Buddhist in association, are universal in their meaning.

Again it is with Ashoka that the history of cave-architecture commences. The earliest excavated cave-dwellings in India are those of the Barabar group placed in the 12th and 19th regnal years of Ashoka. These caves are situated in an isolated range of hills on the left bank of the Phalgu river in the Gaya district. They are seven in number and both internally and externally are plain in appearance. To excavate caves from hard rock, 30 ft. to 40 ft. in length, and to polish their interior must have been an effort which could only have been inspired by deep religious sentiment. The influence of wooden architecture on the door-jambs and other details of construction is interesting from the technical point of view.

Incidentally, a reference may be made to some of the surviving *yaksha* (semi-divine beings) figures from Didarganj, Parkham, Patna and Besnagar. In contradistinction to Mauryan art, these reveal an entirely Indian inspiration and characteristics of an indigenous technique in sculpture which has reached

considerable maturity. These belong to the Maurya period and are characteristic in their "archaic stiffness" and simplification of form which derives additional emphasis from their massive volume. Like the Ashokan pillars these also are made of grey sandstone.

As the Mauryan sculptors were collecting their tools after a magnificent display of their artistic capabilities, a local idiom was bursting into exuberent life in central India. This is the art of Sanchi and Barhut ascribed to the Shunga times (2nd-1st centuries B.C.). At Sanchi and Barhut in central India are situated the two famous *stupas*. Each monument consists of a hemispherical solid brick dome surmounted with a shaft and an umbrella, the symbol of spiritual sovereignty. The *stupa* began as a memorial monument enshrining the post-cremation relics either of the Buddha or some of his outstanding disciples. In course of time it developed into a place of worship. These *stupas* were surrounded by a railing running all around opening into four gateways in the cardinal directions. The railings are profusely covered with sculptures depicting either scenes from the life of the historical Buddha or incidents from his legendary past lives. This art is essentially a folk art with an intense feeling for nature and a vivid comprehension of the unity of all life, human, animal and vegetable. There is nothing hieratic in it and whatever spirituality there is, is more intended than made manifest. There is in it a display of an evident delight in life felt by a people living close to the soil and smelling of the market-place. In it life has the continuity of a stream and space is reduced to a mere convention. Kings and courtiers, merchants and hunters, gods and fairies, animals and trees spread across the surface of the stone in a perfect riot of form and volume, fused into a dignified cavalcade of life with all its trifling prides, high hopes and great aspirations. The method is that of continuous narration and the technique used is that of the "memory-picture". The sculptor turns a story-teller, inventing little but suggesting everything. The design is bold, the relief-cutting low and the intention unmistakable. Germinating in the soil, this art is nurtured into a life full of purposeful vitality by the Buddhist historical realism and

spiritual idealism which sets out to impress but lingers on to convert.

While Barhut and Sanchi were attempting to reveal the Great Man through experiments in symbolism, in the far north and north-west the land was getting ready to receive an infusion of exotic influences. In establishing a new way of life, Buddhism had unleashed tremendous creative forces. Starting his life as a Teacher of moral values, the Buddha, striding through the corridor of the centuries, became the Saviour of a world plunged in misery. The Noble Eightfold Path was a philosophy for Man, and it mattered little if he was born under an Indian sky or in the light of a constellation illuminating a foreign landscape. It was this universality of approach that appealed so much to the many, and Buddhism gradually found favour with millions, Indians and foreigners alike. In the 1st century A.D. ruled the Kushans, the greatest of whom was Kanishka. The Kushana empire stretched from Mathura to Central Asia and the borders of the Roman empire, becoming the meeting place of Indian, Chinese, Persian and Graeco-Roman cultural influences. Under these circumstances was born the Gandhara art, trying to do the impossible in interpreting Indian subjects through the Graeco-Roman technique. It is generally believed that it was under these circumstances that the first icons of the Buddha were made, though the possibility of an indigenous origin cannot be ruled out altogether. The Gandhara Buddha figure sports a robe neatly gathered up in well-chiselled folds, a curious combination of a prince and an ascetic, in which the prince is obtrusive and the ascetic uncomfortable. The sentiment is Buddhistic but only imperfectly understood, the technique excellent though surreptitiously grafted on a foreign soil. The first impression is pleasing but the after-thought is disappointing. There is plenty of charm in it but little of real beauty as an Indian would understand it.

Though an aesthetic failure, Gandhara was a tremendous iconographic success, for, from now on, the Buddha figure becomes the vogue. Mathura develops into a great workshop turning out hundreds of figures which adorn the Buddhist tale yet scarcely draw the moral. And while the northern Indian

sculptor grapples with the problem of creating a real Buddha in stone, far away on the south bank of the Krishna river the Amaravato sculptor reveals a rare imaginative grasp and delights in an exquisite rendering of foliage and flower scrolls, cut in very low relief, to adorn the *stupa*. Under the rule of the Satavahanas in the Deccan and Andhra, Buddhist art finds welcome patronage and the cave-temples of Kanheri (some 20 miles outside of Bombay city), Karle (70 miles from Bombay city on the Bombay-Poona highway) and Nasik are excavated. The architectural model in wood exerts a strong influence, and the monastic needs and guild workmanship combine in producing an architectural art of great significance in the art history of India. The cave-temple is a complex of a monastic residence and a place of meditation and worship, and these functional needs exert their controlling influence on the evolution of these excavated rock-structures. From the collapse of the Mauryas to the establishment of the Gupta empire in the 4th century A.D. is a period of restlessness, as much artistic as political. The landscape is littered with the ruins of an old empire, breaking through the surface of which rise small states and petty principalities which try to express the stability of an imperial tradition through moments of hectic political activity. In art it is an age of experiment struggling to find satisfactory medium and form to express the creative urge of a people tossed hither and thither by the eddying currents of political stress and spiritual search. With the foundation of the Gupta empire the stress of experiment is transformed into a classical maturity of expression and the elegant perfection of a consciously confident technique. The art of the Gupta age (4th-6th century A.D.) is "a flower of established tradition, a polished and perfected medium" for the statement of intellectualized emotion. It is an age of sculpture in the round wherein bas-relief is a lesser style. There is an obvious maturity in the use of gestures (*mudras*), the cutting of the drapery is developed into a fine and sensitive tradition and there is no more divergence of feeling between doctrine and form.

The Gupta age is rightly described as an age of renaissance displaying great creative effort in the political, literary, scienti-

fic and artistic areas. Unfortunately, vandalism has destroyed much of the art of this period though what remains sufficiently justifies the great praise lavished upon it. The Mathura Buddha figure, the life-size composition showing the nativity of Krishna from Pathari in Bhopal and the celebrated Ajanta paintings are some of the immortal remains of the classical age of ancient India. The standing Buddha, with the almost transparent garment held taut across the body, and the peace and glory radiating from the face, is characteristic of the best in the Gupta tradition. Lofty spiritual idealism is expressed through a masterly technique, displaying an intimate knowledge of the material as well as the capability of the instruments. The Gupta Buddha figure, sculptured with so much intensity of feeling and maturity of technique, can rightly claim to be the symbol of all that was the best in ancient India itself, so rich yet so restrained, so confident yet so natural.

The wall-paintings of Ajanta are usually associated with the classical tradition of the Gupta age, though Ajanta is situated far from the centres of the Gupta empire itself. Ajanta is near a small village called Fardapur in the new Bombay state, some thirty miles from Jalgaon. The 29 caves are excavated in the face of a horse-shoe-shaped hill and the site chosen reveals a great appreciation of the beauties of nature on the part of those who founded this monastic settlement. Though architecturally interesting Ajanta is more famous for its frescoes which now survive only in six caves—Nos. I, II, IX, X, XVI and XVII. These frescoes, along with those at Bagh (in the old Gwalior State) and Sigiriya (Ceylon) are all that remain of what was once a very extensive school of painting which exerted its influence as far away as Central Asia and China. The Ajanta paintings must have been executed over a period of centuries—those in Caves IX and X being the earliest and the ones in I and II being the last. The subjects are Buddhist, being scenes from the life of the Buddha, historical and legendary. The style is simple and bold, and the outline spirited and vigorous. The artists who painted these scenes had a long tradition of maturity behind them. The compositions are large and brilliantly visualized, with the

principal characters set out in heroic proportions. Everywhere there is an air of nobility and dignity, and the simple line is so used as to reveal the entire range of expressions from exultant joy to profound sorrow. The most representative piece is that of the Bodhisattva Padmapani, the Being of Mercy, shown in an over-life-size composition in Cave I. Towering high above the surroundings stands this Being, the embodiment of Transcendental Wisdom (*Pradnya*) and Compassion (*Karuna*), holding a lotus in his right hand, stooping slightly and looking downwards, as if casting his profoundly compassionate glance at suffering humanity. In the expression of profound sorrow and compassion the figure is a masterpiece, the like of which it is difficult to find. Within a panel like this, life stands transfigured where its earthly quality withers away and everything assumes a cosmic significance. The blues, greens, purples and reds mingle in an admirable harmony of tone and feeling. Economy of line and expressiveness of detail lend to the composition an atmosphere of great spiritual beauty and significance. Though the choice of the subjects is invariably religious, secular life abounds all around. Court scenes and animal vignettes, flowers and skies, birds and mythical beings are all there, informing us that the artist's vision encompassed the entire universe in all its phases and planes of existence. Some of the animal studies are remarkable for their vitality, force and close observation of nature. The style is narrational where the device of suggestion is used with great skill. The strong but sensitive line, the suggestive use of colour, the refinement and harmony of form, the impressiveness of attitudes and the dignity of expression are some of the characteristics of this brilliant school of art.

The tradition of the Buddhist cave-temple and the monastery is carried forward through great examples. The inspiring force is now that of Brahmanism of the *Puranic* variety; the early promise of the capabilities of the Brahmanical cave-temple is revealed in the caves of Badami excavated during the time of the imperial Chalukyas. Badami, situated on the Hotgi-Gadag stations of the Bombay-Madras line, is a group of four caves which generally follow the earlier pattern of cave-architecture, but the pillars and capitals reveal some

interesting new characteristics. Of the four Cave II is "by far the finest of the series and one of the most interesting Brahmanical examples in India. The cave opens on the north, and the level of the floor is eight or nine feet above that of the court outside. A narrow platform is built up outside the whole length of the front. In the east end of the verandah is a large figure of Vishnu seated on the body of the great serpent Sesha or Ananta, which is thrice coiled round below him, while its heads — five in this instance — are spread out over and round his big *mukuta* or crown, as if to protect it." The other representations in the caves are the *Varaha* (Boar Incarnation), the *Narasimha* (the Man-Lion Incarnation), and the *Vamana* (the Dwarf Incarnation). In assessing their artistic value, it has been pointed out that they are of great significance indicating as they do the development of sculpture in the Deccan, "visualizing trans-substantiated form on the basis of knowledge that during the past centuries had derived its strength and increased its technical facilities by its inherent kinship with the interpretation of nature".

But with Ellora comes the climax. While the priest-artistes of Ajanta were busy revealing the eternal in the ephemeral, the hills of Ellora were resounding with the hammer-blows of the master-craftsmen hewing out their dream of the abode of the gods—Kailasa—in stone. Ellora is situated near Aurangabad in the Bombay State. There are three distinct groups of cave-temples there, Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain, and this activity of creating great temples from rugged rock must have been spread over considerable time beginning almost at the same time as the caves of Ajanta and culminating in that *tour de force,* Kailasa. The most interesting group is the Brahmanical-Shaivite, the least interesting the Jain complex showing unmistakable signs of decadence. Excavated from the top downwards, the Kailasa is designed in the nature of a structural temple, plane upon plane and mass poised upon mass. The *Dashavatara* (Ten Incarnations) gallery is a monument of great dramatic force emerging from inert rock. The entire sculpture is an embodiment of purposeful energy; muscles swell and contract with a dynamism that is utterly indescribable and the rock stands transformed into figures of cosmic force and

purpose. Like the Dance of Shiva, so full of energy and yet so mystical, the sculptures at Ellora stretch out into timeless space. There is increasing elegance in its slender forms which are poised to take part in the drama of the universe. Ellora is related to Pattadakal and Badami and belongs to the style generally described as Dravidian, not so much in ethnic as in stylistic significance. The Kailasa was completed during the time of the Rashtrakutas in the closing decades of the 8th century A.D.

In Ellora the great tradition of the excavated rock-temple finds its ultimate fruition, and the transition from the excavated monastery to the simulated structural temple is complete. This tradition manifests itself further south in the *ratha* of Mahabalipuram near Madras. These monolithic temples are five in all and are named after the Pandava heroes of the *Mahabharata*, Dharmaraja, Arjuna, Bhima, and their consort Draupadi, and another for Ganesha. Four stand in a line running north-north-east to south-south-west. The Draupadi temple is a cell 11 ft. square with a curvilinear roof rising to a height of 18 ft. It is the most completely finished of the five. The Arjuna temple is a copy of the Dharmaraja while the Bhima *ratha* is the finest and most interesting of the group. The three upper storeys are ornamented with little simulated cells. The Ganesha *ratha* is situated at some distance from the others and is a small and singularly elegant temple. It is in three storeys and shows a form known in later Dravidian architecture as the *Gopuram*-gateway. Of great interest is the fact that these *rathas* — completed in the 7th century A.D. — formed the originals from which all the *vimanas* in South India were copied and continued to be copied nearly unchanged until a very late period.

Mahabalipuram belongs to the Pallava epoch to which also belong the Kailasa and Vaikuntha temples of Conjeeveram. The excavated temple is now left behind and structural edifices take their place. The lofty towers, built tier upon tier, diminishing in size towards the summit, typify all the elegance and wealth of the Pallava empire and the tradition is carried on into the Chola times. In northern India this tradition of temple building of the mediaeval times is seen at Konarak and Khajuraho. The main difference between the

two great styles of temple architecture, the northern and the southern, lies in the *shikhara* or the towers. In the northern temples there is a "bulging steeple with curvilinear verticle ribs, placed over the sanctuary, and frequently reproduced on other parts of the building" the whole thing being derived from the bamboo framework of the processional temple car. In the southern style there is a "straight-lined tower divided into stories by horizontal bands, and surmounted by either a barrel-roofed ridge or a small dome". The central shrine is surrounded by a spacious quadrangle which is walled and includes many subsidiary temples, tanks and cloisters. The entrance to the quadrangle is through the lofty gateways which form such a characteristic feature of some areas of the South Indian landscape. The basic part of all temples is the shrine, generally rectangular, surmounted by a high roof, "which may grow into a steeple, by prefixing porch, which may grow into a nave, and be further amplified by aisles, transepts, and subsidiary steeples, until an architectural composition of extreme complexity is evolved."

With the rise of the structural temples the age of great excavated temples is over. The last great example is that of Elephanta, situated on an island off the city of Bombay. The main temple at Elephanta has one of the most interesting examples of sculpture, namely, the *Trimurti* or the representation of Shiva in three aspects, creative, meditative and destructive. In it is seen the culmination of the art of creating live form out of motionless mass, where grandeur in proportion is combined with delicacy of expression, and the sculptor is no longer a mere craftsman but a devotee and a philosopher as well. Something of this is carried over into the bronzes of the Chola period cast in the *cire perdue* technique, of which the image of *Nataraja* or the Dancing Shiva is the most familiar example.

In temple building some remarkable structures were built during the period ranging from the 10th to the 14th centuries A.D. Of these the group of temples in Orissa and Bundelkhand deserves mention. The Orissa temples, at Bhuvaneshwar, Konarak and Puri — all in the Puri district — were built during the period from the 9th to the 13th centuries A.D. The

temple at Konarak, known as the Black Pagoda, is dedicated to the Sun God and was built by King Narasimha who ruled between A.D. 1240 and 1280. It is an outstanding example of the Orissa school of architecture and is counted among the finest ancient temples of India. The Khajuraho group of temples in Bundelkhand belongs to the 11th century A.D. and is well known for its sculptures. In the west the Jain marble temples at Mount Abu represented a prodigious effort in pious patronage and sculptural skill. These were built between the 11th and the 13th centuries and the gorgeousness and skill of their sculptures rightly give them a place among the most notable monuments of India.

In the south some of the great temples were erected under the patronage of the Cholas and Hoysalas. These were the great temples at Tanjore built by Raja Raja in the 10th century A.D. The Belur temple and the Halebid complex were erected by the Hoysalas in the 12th century A.D., while the last great effort at magnificent temple building is seen at Madurai where the grand edifices were erected in the 17th century A.D.

But the best already belonged to the past. The age of great temples and great sculpture for Hindu India was over and a new chapter in the history of art and architecture in India began when the mosques, mausoleums and palaces of the Muslim kings began to adorn the Indian landscape.

II

Long before the establishment of their power in India the Muslims had evolved definite ideas concerning the architectural planning and construction of the edifices which answered their religious and civic needs. Mahmud of Ghazni had beautified his beloved city with mosques, palaces and gardens and in Persia a brilliant style of architecture was showing some very interesting results. Mahmud Ghori and his lieutenants came as invading cavalrymen into India and though they travelled light it is possible that their camp-followers included some craftsmen and builders. The Muslim kings built three distinct groups of edifices in India. The first was the mosque so

necessary for their congregational prayers. The *Jami Masjid* or the "Friday" mosque generally contained a large open rectangular court with arcades or colonnades on all sides. The arcade nearest to Mecca was the sanctuary and was made deeper than the rest. In the centre of the back wall of the sanctuary on the inner side was a niche with a pointed head showing the direction of Mecca, essential for the conduct of prayers. Adjoining this there was a minaret with a gallery intended for the *muezzin* to call the faithful to prayer. Within the mosque the other essential facilities were the tank of water for the ceremonial ablutions and the pulpit for the conduct of the congregational prayers. The early sultans of Delhi had neither the time nor the opportunities for building great new mosques and they took a very practical view of things by using the materials from the Hindu temples destroyed by them for conversion into mosques. And this was not difficult though the Muslim mosque and the Hindu temple differed so much from each other in outward appearances. As has been stated by one authority, "a characteristic feature of many Hindu temples as well as of almost every Muslim mosque —a feature derived from the traditional dwelling house of the East and as familiar in India as in other parts of Asia— was the open court encompassed by chambers or colonnades, and such temples as were built on this plan naturally lent themselves to conversion into mosques and would be the first to be adopted for the purpose by the conquerors. Again a fundamental characteristic that supplied a common link between the two styles was the fact that both Islamic and Hindu art were inherently decorative. Ornament was as vital to the one as to the other; both were dependent on it for their very being." A great controversy has arisen about the nature of Indo-Muslim art and there are protagonists who argue that it was essentially a Hindu art modified by Persian and Arabic elements which, however, were only of a peripheral significance. This is the argument of Havell who devotes a great deal of his attention to a comparison between the *shikhara* of the Hindu temple and the dome of the Muslim mosque or tomb and also discusses the influence of certain Hindu motifs. While such a position would deny the influence of pre-Indian

Islamic ideas on the evolution of Indo-Muslim art and would be an extreme position to adopt there seems to be little doubt that this Indo-Muslim art was conditioned as much by the religious and cultural needs of Islam as by the technique and talents of the Hindu masons and architects who were impressed into their service by the Muslim conquerors.

The first great mosque to be built in India was the Kuwwat-ul-Islam (Might of Islam) completed in 1198. This was located in Delhi and occupied the site of an older Hindu temple. The Qutb Minar, a prominent landmark of Delhi, was begun by Qutb-ud-Din Aibak (1206-1210), the founder of the Slave Dynasty. The precise nature of this monument is the subject of difference of opinion as it has been variously stated as a minaret and as a Tower of Victory. Built as a memorial to the saint Qutab Shah it was completed by Iltutmish (1210-1235) and has a height of 242 ft. With its tapered cylindrical form and fluted surface it is a monument of impressive proportions and dignity, designed by a Muslim architect but built by Hindu craftsmen. It was struck by lightning during the time of Firuz Tughlaq (1351-1388) who dismantled the fourth story and built two smaller stories. Finally in 1503 its upper stories were repaired by Sikandar Lodi.

Another building of this early period is the great mosque at Ajmer completed in the reign of Iltutmish.

The Slave Kings were overthrown by the Khiljis. This was a period of the Mongol invasions and constant wars and expeditions and there was little in the way of noteworthy building activity. Alauddin Khilji (1296-1316) often thought of grandiose schemes and among these may be included his plan to build a minaret twice the size of the famous Qutb Minar. Alauddin enlarged the Kuwwat-ul-Islam mosque and his Alai Darwaza, the south gateway to the mosque, is a remarkable example of early Indo-Muslim art.

In the provinces over which the different sultans ruled evolved distinct provincial styles. Thus the sultans of Jaunpur were great builders and the Atala mosque, completed in the reign of Sultan Ibrahim, and the Jami mosque of Husain Shah are impressive buildings. In Bengal the Hindu temple influenced

the Muslim mosques to the farthest extent and the brick mosques of Gaur show this influence. In Mandu of the 15th century the local sultans built such beautiful buildings as the Jami mosque, the Hindola palace, the tomb of Hushang Shah and the palaces of Baz Bahadur and Rani Rupamati. Ahmad Shah of Gujarat was a great builder and in Ahmedabad, the city he founded, he erected a number of imposing buildings in which Hindu and Jain influences are apparent. In the Deccan Gulbarga, Bidar, Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Golconda saw the erection of mosques, forts, tombs and palaces by the sultans of the five kingdoms. Of these the Gol Gumbuz — the tomb of Muhammad Adil Shah — is the most impressive and its dome is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Further south the Vijayanagara kings continued to build their temples and palaces in the traditional Dravidian style and the temple of Vitthala and the palaces attracted great attention and drew fulsome praise from the foreign travellers such as Abdur Razak and Nicolo Conti.

With the foundation of the Mughal empire a new chapter in the history of Indo-Muslim art and architecture opened. The Mughals loved to build magnificent edifices and lavished their fabulous wealth on their decoration. The cities of Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Fatehpur Sikri and Allahabad have numerous buildings which today stand in testimony of the aesthetic ideas of the great Mughals. Babar (1526-1530), the founder of the Mughal empire, hardly had time to build anything of note. In his *Memoirs* he states, however, that "686 men worked daily on my buildings in Agra" and "1491 stone-cutters worked daily on my buildings in Agra, Bayana, Dholpur, Gwalior and Kiul". Babar disliked the architecture of the cities of northern India he saw and complains bitterly of the lack of taste shown by the people of the country. He wanted to build on a grand scale but what he could build, within the time at his disposal, was mostly in the nature of pavilions, tanks, wells and gardens — and practically nothing of this has survived today. Babar is reputed to have built three mosques; one in Kabuli Bagh at Panipat, another at Sambhal and a third within the old Lodi Fort at Agra. All of these have little to recommend themselves in the way of artistic merits. Babar's

successor was his son Humayun who was a great dilettante and set out to build a gorgeous city known as Din Panah ("World Refuge") at Delhi. Little of this is recognizable today in the ruins of old Delhi as Sher Shah, the Afghan usurper, destroyed it prior to building a new city for himself which he could not complete before his death in 1545. The finest edifice of Sher Shah's time is his tomb at Sasaram in Bihar. It is situated in the middle of a large artificial lake on a terrace 300 ft. square, with a sanctuary 135 ft. in diameter and surmounted by a dome 71 ft. in diameter. Its plinth and the high terrace above are square in plan and the tomb itself is three-storied and octagonal in shape. Looking at it from across the lake one is reminded of the great Afghan, so compelling in his strength, yet so cultured and dignified in his personal and administrative conduct.

The tomb of Humayun at Delhi is the first of the series of great buildings which saw the flowering of the Indo-Muslim style of architecture. It was built by his widow Haji Begum under the supervision of the Persian architect Mirak Mirza Ghiyas and marks the beginning of a new style of architecture. Its podium of red sandstone is 22 ft. high and the tomb itself is 156 ft. square and 125 ft. high. The red sandstone and white marble make a pleasing composition and its location in the centre of a large park-like enclosure is among its most attractive features. The reign of Akbar the Great (1556-1605) saw the beginning of architecture on a grand and lavish scale. Akbar's real building activities began in 1569 with the foundation of the city of Fatehpur Sikri some twenty-three miles from Agra. It was designed to reflect the glory of the court of the Great Mughal who made it his residence until 1585. The city had a circumference of seven miles, was walled on three sides with nine gateways and a large artificial lake on the fourth side. Within its radius were built magnificent buildings like the Jami mosque with a quadrangle 433 ft. by 366 ft., the Bulund Darwaza, an impressive structure 130 ft. wide, 88 ft. deep and 134 ft. high, a memorial to his victories, the palaces with their halls of public and private audiences and the palaces of Raja Birbal and Jodh Bai the empress. All this brilliant architectural activity was capped

with the building of Akbar's own tomb at Sikandra near Delhi. This stands on an arcaded podium 30 ft. high and 300 ft. square, while the tomb proper is some 150 ft. high.

Akbar's successor was his son Jahangir who ruled from 1605 to 1628. Jahangir was of a romantic temperament and took as much delight in drinking wine as in laying out beautiful gardens. The outstanding creations of his time are the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque) at Lahore and the Shah Dara or the Garden of Delight near the same city. The climax of Mughal architecture came in the reign of Shah Jahan who, in his Taj Mahal, created an edifice of dream-like quality and immortal beauty. This was begun as a memorial to his wife Mumtaz Mahal who died in 1631. The building of the Taj Mahal took 22 years and cost 30 million rupees. The emperor set aside something like 100,000 rupees a year for its maintenance.

The procedure adopted for the construction of this magnificent sepulchre is extremely interesting. The emperor took great personal interest in the plan and called a meeting of some of the most outstanding builders at his disposal. These came from India and Central and Western Asia and never before in the history of art has such a perfect synthesis in divergent art styles worked out. Among the makers of the Taj were Muhammad Hanif of Kandahar, Mahmud Sayid and Abu Torah from Multan, Ismail Khan Rumi, an expert in dome construction, Muhammad Sharif of Samarqand and Kazim Khan of Lahore—expert in the construction of minarets—Pira of Delhi, a master carpenter, Amanat Khan of Shiraz, Quadar Zaman and Muhammad Khan of Baghdad and Raushan Khan from Syria, expert calligraphists and skilled *pietra dura* artists like Chiranji Lal of Kanauj assisted by Chota Lal, Mannu Lal and Manohar Singh—all Hindus—trained in a long tradition. The decorations were done by Ata Muhammad and Shakar Muhammad from Bokhara, Banuhar, Shah Mal and Zorawar from Delhi and Ram Lal Kashmiri, the expert in garden lay-out, was in charge of the designing of the beautiful gardens. The chief architect responsible for general supervision was Ustad Isa who probably hailed from Shiraz. This international team worked well. There is also a suggestion by Father Manrique, an Augustinian friar, that an Italian named

Geronimo Verono was the chief architect of the Taj Mahal. But the Taj itself shows nothing of the Italian renaissance influence and the Indian sources of the time do not even mention the name of the Italian. It is possible that Geronimo submitted a plan which, however, was not approved by the emperor. The mausoleum is 186 ft. square and stands on a terrace 22 ft. high and 313 ft. square. The material used is marble from the best quarries of Rajputana, red sandstone and precious stones, which have now disappeared.

The Taj Mahal, in the words of Vincent Smith, is an "immense enclosed complex of buildings and gardens" comprising the "central mausoleum, the mosque on the west, a corresponding (*jawab*) edifice on the east, intended as a place of assembly for the congregation of the mosque and the persons invited to the annual commemoration services; huge gateways with many chambers, massive enclosing walls, and various minor structures". The beauty of the edifice culminates in the superb grace of the central dome and the exquisite minarets lend to it qualities of unequalled charm. The Taj has been rightly praised for its "perfection of proportions, the symmetry and just balance of its structural masses" and the exquisiteness of its decorative details. Its superb simplicity and the purity of its form make the Taj Mahal one of the world's most beautiful buildings and Havell calls it "India's Venus de Milo; the apotheosis of Indian womanhood". As it stands with the river Jamuna in the background, the Taj Mahal appears like a poem in marble, the great testament of a magnificent emperor's love for his empress.

Among the other buildings of the time mention may be made of the fort and the Jami Masjid at Delhi. After Shah Jahan's deposition in 1658 there began the decline in Mughal architecture and art. Aurangzeb, Shah Jahan's son and successor, was a puritan of puritans and most of his time was spent in quelling rebellions and enlarging his empire. The noteworthy buildings of his time are the Moti mosque at Delhi, the Badshahi mosque at Lahore and his wife's mausoleum at Aurangabad, the last of which, though built in imitation of the Taj, clearly betrays the parsimonious nature of the emperor. The reign of Aurangzeb marks the beginning of the decline of

architecture in India for though interesting buildings continued to be built by the local satraps and the Rajput and Maratha rulers in the 18th century they were simply provincial copies of some of the magnificent forts and palaces built by the Grand Mughals. The age of great architecture was already past and the buildings erected during the British period had hardly any interesting or impressive features to deserve special mention.

The Mughals were not only responsible for great architecture but were also eminent patrons of painting and music. The growth of the Mughal school of painting is due to the interest of the great Akbar. The home of this school of painting was in Samarqand and Herat, then deeply under Persian influence. Painting was a court art and rulers like Sultan Hussein of Khorasan patronized great painters like Bihzad who is spoken of as the "Raphael of the East". Babar speaks of this artist with great admiration in his *Memoirs*. This love for art was a striking characteristic of some of the great Mughals like Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. At Akbar's court lived painters who came from distant areas. There were Farrukh, the Kalmak, Abd-al-Samad of Shiraz, Mir Sayyad Ali of Tabriz, and Daswant, Baswan, Sanwal Das, Tarachand and Jagannath who were Hindus. And though Mughal art started its career as an exotic plant it very soon became acclimatized to the Indian soil and assimilated many typically Indian features.

The art that was thus fostered by Akbar's patronage very soon produced a rich harvest. In its initial stages it was a court art, secular in its intent and eclectic in its character. Its keynote was realism and it excelled in miniatures showing an obvious connection with the Persian tradition of book illustration. The Mughal miniature is characteristic in the "calligraphic character of its outline" and "the introduction of modelling by means of delicate shading and an indigenous interpretation of perspective". It shows a tendency towards foreshortening and displays a keen appreciation of nature. It is "crisp and clear in outline" and produced some of the best portraiture in India. Akbar supported as many as 40 artists and commissioned some of his Hindu painters to illustrate the work of the Persian poet Nizami and the way they accom-

plished this shows their remarkable adaptability. Abul Fazl says : "His Majesty himself sat for likeness, and also ordered to have the likenesses taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed : those that have passed away have received a new life, and those who are still alive have immortality promised them." We have a number of portraits of Akbar and they seem to bring out the spirited and vigorous personality of this great Moghul. Akbar's successor Jahangir continued this great tradition of patronage to painting and a number of paintings showing hunting scenes and pictures of flowers, animals and birds have come down to us from this period. As a very interesting example of bird-drawing may be mentioned the drawing of the Turkey cock. Mughal portraiture is always shown in profile but the artist excels in delineating the hands through which an unusual glimpse into the character of the figure is offered. The figure is drawn against a severe background with a realistic likeness and a superb skill displayed in the shading and colour-scheme. But it is the product of convention, bound by tradition and reflecting the changing tastes of a court. The art of painting began to suffer its decline in the time of Shah Jahan, who was more interested in monumental architecture than in painting, and in Aurangzeb's regime it lost its royal patronage. It continued to survive as the Delhi *Kalm* (brush or school) during the tumultuous days of the later Moghuls and received some patronage from the nobility. But its best days were already long past. It, however, influenced the Deccan school of painting and gave rise to provincial schools like those of Lucknow and Patna.

Alongside of the Mughal, but independent of it, developed the Rajput school of painting. It had an entirely indigenous origin and its roots may be traced back to the tradition of Ajanta. It was Hindu in inspiration and owed its growth to the revival of Hinduism especially in the *Bhakti* cult. It was primarily a folk art and though, like the Mughal, it produced mainly miniatures, the tradition of miniatures that it followed may be linked with indigenous sources like the art of Jain miniature paintings and illustrated manuscripts. The centre of this art was Jaipur but it received patronage also at Udaipur

and Bikanir in Rajputana and in the Kangra Valley in the Punjab. The outline, as distinguished from the Mughal school, is soft and rounded. Its subjects are taken either from daily life such as bazar scenes and road scenes or from mythology and especially from the two great epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. Finding court patronage it produced a remarkable series of portraits. As it developed in the Kangra school (also known as the Pahari school) the Rajput art became one of "patient labour and naive devotion" and is characterized by "delicacy of line, brilliancy of colour and minuteness of decorative detail." After the eclipse of the Rajput power it received patronage from the Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1803-1839) but by the end of the century it was already on the decline. The end of the Kangra school came in 1905 when the great earthquake not only destroyed towns and hamlets in the valley but also killed most of the artists.

This Rajput art is essentially an art of the line. Its "vigorous archaic outline is the basis of its language. Wiry, distinct and sharp as that golden rule desired by Blake ; sensitive, reticent and tender, it perfectly reflects the severe self-control and sweet serenity of Indian life." The Krishna-Radha series of pictures and the pictures illustrating the *ragas* (melodies of Indian music) are some of its outstanding achievements. In many of the paintings there is displayed a rare skill in the use of double-light (e.g. light of the moon and the camp-fire) and the bazar and road scenes are delightful in their quaint realism.

The decline of the Mughals ushered in an era of great political turmoil which ended only with the establishment of British rule in India. Some of the artists worked for the John Company but their work is interesting only in so far as it shows the progress of decadence. The British era was not conducive to great architecture and painting and the only memorials of this phase of Indian history are the curious pseudo-Gothic buildings built by the rulers and their Indian feudatories. In town-planning Sir Edward Lyutens tried out an interesting experiment in the lay-out and building of New Delhi but the result was far from satisfactory. After Independence the French architect, Le Corbusier, was entrusted with the building of

Chandigarh, capital of Punjab. However, it remains to be seen whether Chandigarh is powerful enough to provide an inspiration for the rise of a new style of architecture in India.

III

Modern India stands today betwixt the Lyutensian New Delhi and Chandigarh ; the first is unsatisfying and the second uncertain. Much water has flowed down the Ganges and the Jamuna between the times when the Taj Mahal was built and New Delhi was laid out. The buildings erected during the British period are examples of stolidity, drabness and soul-searing utilitarianism with a veneer of false classical grace. They represent a world transplanted ; many of them are just "colonial" and quite a few of them are illustrations of the philistinism of the new rich. The great temples are a thing of the remote past and whenever new ones are built they are resplendent with fluorescent lamps exposing their incongruous masses of stone, cement and concrete. A Marine Drive in Bombay may proudly reflect the riches of the new Indian aristocracy but it cannot have the charm and the dignity of the prosperity of the old world. Some of the newly built temples in Delhi may be excellent testaments of the faith of the donors but they could hardly be regarded as harbingers of a new age in Indian architecture.

If painting and sculpture survive they reflect the same agony as is expressed through architecture and literature. From recapturing the spirit of the past to imitating the works in the salons of Paris, the Indian painter, today, ranges over centuries in search of an adequate form to express his unique situation. If the return to Ajanta was the demand of the nationalistic ethos, the understudying of Picasso and Matisse is considered to be essential to the expression of an analogous experience. It is an attempt to seize the vital in the task of expression, of an extensive range of feelings. Shiva, Krishna and Radha, the Buddha and Bodhisattva, episodes from the *Puranas* and stories from the *Jatakas*—everything has been tried and the scale of achievement ranges from the admirable technician like Ravi Varma to creative artists like Nandalal Bose, Abanindra-

nath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gill and Jamini Roy. Mythology and mysticism, straight narration and planned abstraction, such was the range of experiment. But it has failed to be profoundly significant. If the artist tried to recapture the spirit of Ajanta without being a Buddhist in thought, feeling and emotion the follower and imitator of modernism in Indian art tried to picture the reaction to the twentieth century without being touched by the harrowing experiences of a twentieth century Europe. And if mythology failed in developing into living symbolism, mere abstraction refused to satisfy as it was unrelated to a specific experience growing out of the soil and spreading towards an uncertain frontier. Painfully and slowly it had been realized that imitation, whether of Ajanta or of Picasso, is not creation and folk art, such as it survives, is eagerly seized upon in search of vitality and significance. In rarer cases like that of Jamini Roy this is not an escape into folk art for Roy finds the previsual stage, the stage of pure values, in folk art. The efforts of Sankho Chaudhury in sculpture are yet another instance of the search for value and significance through experiments in the shape of plastic form. Where architecture was a casualty of British conquest paintings proved to be more resilient. The government schools of art in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Lahore and Lucknow succeeded in keeping alive the moribund plant of art. In the fields of music and dancing there were also a rediscovery and a revival. The dance, since its association with prostitution and temple-dancing, had fallen on evil days. In the 30's and 40's there was a revival of interest in this form of art of the dance and it was rescued from utter degeneration and oblivion by such great artistes as Uday Shankar, Simki and Menaka, and Ram Gopal. Dance in ancient India was regarded as the delight of the divine and the ancient sculptures give ample evidence of its popularity and respectability. But, due to the stress of historical circumstances, the elegant artist of old became a "nautch-girl" and the sneers of orthodoxy condemned the practice of this fine art to the status of debauchery. The art of the dance in India is broadly divided into four styles : Manipuri or the folk dance of north-eastern India ; Kathak of northern India; Kathakali and Bharat Natyam of Malabar and the

Tamil and Andhra areas. Of these Bharat Natyam is the most hieratic, Kathakali is the masque-dance *par excellence* (drawing for its subjects on the great Hindu epics of old) while the Kathak reflects the vicissitudes of Hindu and Muslim patronage. Shanta Rao and Balasaraswati have effectively shown the capabilities of an ancient form of dance like the Bharat Natyam and today a generation of young Indian artistes is heir to the promise of a revival of the old art of dance.

Like the dance in India, Indian music also shows signs of revival. Indian music, unlike Western music, is based on half-tones and quarter-tones. It makes use of wind instruments like the flute, stringed instruments like the Sitar and the Sarangi and drums like the Tabla for accompaniment. All through the ancient and medieval periods it received court patronage and one of the greatest figures of Indian music, Tan Sen, enjoyed the active support of the emperor Akbar. This music, as developed by the ancient and medieval artists, is built up around the 48 *ragas* or melodies. It is a hieratic and court art but centuries of its existence have made the masses familiar with some of its elementary melodies. It is broadly divided into two styles, the Carnatic and Hindustani, and since the 30's efforts have been made to encourage its spirited revival. Since the attainment of independence the radio, the direct responsibility of the central government, has attempted to make concerted effort at re-establishing the importance of classical music. In the meanwhile a popular music, an amalgam of Indian melodies and Hollywood tunes, threatens to overwhelm the indigenous style of music and the phenomenal growth of the Indian motion picture industry (second in output only to Hollywood) has given it a mass following. The classical Indian music has to contend with two powerful rivals today; one is the hybrid "popular" music of half-literate crowds in the Indian cities and the other, that of the great mass of rural folk brought up on a tradition of folk music. There is no essential divergence between classical music and folk music in the principles of harmony and melody and it is only when the classical style becomes adapted to the folk needs that the menacing tide of the corrupt, degenerating and hybrid "popular" film music can be stemmed.

The arts of India are on the threshold of a new age. The Government of India has established an academy of literature and drama and there are also organizations for the revival of the arts of architecture, sculpture and painting. So far the results of its encouragement and patronage have not been particularly impressive but perhaps ten years are too short a time-span to judge the revival and blossoming of the arts in a country. The present interest and efforts, however, auger well for the future.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INDIA AND THE WORLD

I

IN THE FOREGOING pages an attempt was made to describe the evolution of the Indian nation in its political and cultural aspects. The narrative, in this account, was more or less restricted in its scope to the vast mass of the land enclosed within the natural geographical frontiers of the country. Geography has made India a distinct unit. The Himalayas have effectively restricted sustained Indian contacts with the trans-Himalayan lands and the periods of Indo-Chinese contacts across the Himalayas have been exceptions rather than the rule in the long history of the two countries. Similarly, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea have, until recently, isolated India from the main currents of life across the oceans. Out of such considerations has grown the persistent idea of an "India living in splendid isolation" which was an important part of much of the writing on India in the West in the closing decades of the last and the opening decades of the present century. The purpose of the present chapter is to examine this concept of an isolated India and discuss when and how there was interaction of ideas and movements between India and the outside world.

Until the discovery of the Indus Valley civilization some 30 years ago it was customary to begin the history of India with the Aryan invasion. The Aryans arrived in India in the second millennium B.C. and created a revolutionary situation in Indian life. Anthropological evidence, however, has shown that even before the coming of the Aryans there were movements of peoples into India in the prehistoric ages. Racially the Indian

population comprises at least five distinct racial elements mingled together in varying proportions. None of these seems to have been autochthonous. The Negroid element contributed the cult of the ficus tree associated with ideas of fertility and with the souls of the dead as also some ideas about the concept of the Path of the Dead guarded by a demon. This element is almost completely submerged today. The next racial element was the proto-Australoid which was responsible for the introduction of the art of pottery, ideas of totemism in religion, terrace cultivation of rice, cultivation of the betel vine, banana, egg-plant, pumpkin, lime, rose-apple, cotton and the domesticated fowl. And its contribution in the field of some basic religious ideas, which became influential in latter-day religious and social beliefs, has been significant indeed. For to this are attributed the introduction of phallic-worship, ideas of taboo, transmigration, of incarnations of God, the serpent cult and the cult of the zoomorphic deities. The Mediterranean element introduced an urban culture, the cults of Shiva and the Mother-Goddess, Krishna as the God of Youth, Ganesha (the present-day elephant-headed god of wisdom and wealth), Hanuman (the monkey-god) and the inclusion of flowers, leaves and water in ceremonial worship. Earlier the use of turmeric and vermilion in religious and social life was introduced at the proto-Australoid stage and hence the present system of worship in Hinduism is the result of these contributions by pre-Aryan elements. To the Mediterranean element is also attributed the idea of prohibited degrees of relationships in marriage, an important feature of the marriage laws of the Hindus. The fusion of all these contributions created that form of popular culture which, even after the Aryan infusion and domination, remained basic in the life of the people.

The Aryan came as an invading conqueror and was ethnically and culturally related to the people who were responsible for the creation of the cultures of the Greeks and the Persians. There is no unanimity of opinion about the original home of the Aryans but the most probable location seems to be south Russia. The Aryan was responsible for the introduction of wheat and barley cultivation and the patriarchal family in social organization. But his most significant contributions were the

gift of the Sanskrit language and the concept of the cosmic law (which later formed the nucleus of the law of Karma). The Aryan also introduced the horse into India and revolutionized the art of war.

Though the Aryan began his career in India with fixed ideas about his own racial and cultural superiority and aimed at keeping his stock pure and aloof, the laws of geography and history, in short the laws of life, were against him. The fusion of Aryan and non-Aryan elements began to progress rapidly and race as the basis of social divisions disappeared from the Indian scene very soon.

The three movements that have moulded Indian life through the centuries have been the Aryan-Dravidian complex, the Islamic movement and the Western movement. All of them profoundly changed the patterns of political, social and cultural behaviour and have been the most significant stages in the evolution of the nation. It is significant that all of these movements came to India from the West, the first two across land and the last across the seas. In all instances the natural frontiers were breached at their weakest spots, exposing dramatically how the so-called insuperable frontiers were unable to stop the tides of world-wide movements from entering India.

II

In the 5th century B.C. north-western India formed a part of the great Persian empire. In 326 India had her first real contact with the Hellenistic world with the invasion of Alexander and the subsequent influx of Greeks and Bactrians into India. The empire of the Kushans was a great meeting place of the four great cultural traditions of China, Persia, India and the Roman world. The coins of the Guptas, as also the beginnings of Buddhist iconography, can be understood adequately only in the context of Graeco-Roman influences. The Arabs were great culture-carriers and were responsible for the introduction of the Hindu system of numerals to the West. The establishment of Muslim rule in India brought millions of Indian Muslims into the great brotherhood of Islam in Asia and Africa.

With the guns and ships of the Portuguese, Dutch, French

and the British the modern era knocked on the doors of India. The West pushed the doors ajar and a commercial corporation became an empire directly linked with centres of power in the West. This created a tremendous upheaval in Indian history and the history of Indo-Western contact for the last 150 years is an account of far-reaching social, economic and political changes in the country. The West deposed the native powers and on its withdrawal handed the power back not to the descendants of the old Mughals, the Nawabs and the Maharajas but to a new class of people who, while they fought imperialism, assimilated ideas of political democracy from the very opponents they were fighting.

The establishment of British political rule in the country made India the king-pin of a world-wide empire. The commercialization of certain crops, the establishment of modern national and maritime communications brought India into the vortex of world affairs.

III

But India was not a passive recipient. If the movements outside her geographical frontiers impinged on her life and created revolutionary situations within it India also influenced the life of millions in Asia. The culture of Asia is a fabric woven out of numerous strands but two are predominant in its composition. These two strands are the Indian and the Chinese elements in the culture of the orient. Geographically the vast arc of the area comprising the modern states of Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaya and Indonesia shows direct affinities with India in its cultural make-up. The Sinic area covers the rest of Asia. But even in China the Indian contribution is not insignificant. This great movement of Indian influences began in the hoary past, probably as early as the 1st century B.C. This process began in a very humble manner when Indian merchants sailed to the countries beyond the seas. India had trade relations both with the East and the West from very ancient times. A *Jataka* story relates how Indian merchants sailed to Babylon with a varied cargo which included a peacock. Other stories speak of merchants going to the

Land of Gold, the territory stretching from Burma to Indonesia, from the ports on the western and eastern coasts of India. These merchants crossed the Bay of Bengal and often landed at a site identified with Takua Pa in Thailand. And then they travelled across the land routes to Cambodia and ultimately reached the other countries of south-east Asia. Some of these merchants settled down in Burma, Thailand or Malaya and formed their own colonies which later became the foci for the radiation of Indian cultural influences. The Buddhist missionaries and Brahmin priests followed these merchants and spread Buddhism and Hinduism in the lands where they settled. Some of these immigrants captured political power and thus began the Indianized kingdoms of south-east Asia. The introduction of Buddhism and Hinduism led to the spread of religious, social and cultural ideas from India into these countries. Pali and Sanskrit, the sacred languages of Buddhism and Hinduism respectively, profoundly influenced the evolution of the languages of south-east Asia and the monuments of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the Boro Budur in Java and the Ananda Temple of Pagan, in Burma, stand today as mementos of this cultural influence. The role of Indian culture in this area was that of a stimulus which brought forth a rich and varied local response. If the local peoples assimilated Indian legal, literary, social and political ideas and scripts they also significantly changed these in the very process of assimilation.

In China, Central Asia and Tibet, the spread of Indian cultural influences was carried on through the Buddhist missionaries. Buddhism contributed significantly to the development of Chinese philosophy and hundreds of Sanskrit works were translated into Chinese enriching Chinese thought and literature. The earliest Indian contacts with China go back to the 1st century A.D. when the emperor Ming-Ti of the Han dynasty sent for Indian Buddhist missionaries for whom the first Buddhist monastery on Chinese soil, the White Horse, was built. From A.D. 67 to 1053 as many as 62 Indian scholars went to China and translated Sanskrit Buddhist works into Chinese. The founder of the contemplative school of Mahayana Buddhism was an Indian named Bodhodharma. His Ch'an

school became highly influential and spread from China to Korea and Japan. The inspiration of Ch'an or Zen Buddhism has been of crucial importance in Chinese and Japanese literature and art. The Sanskrit language also contributed numerous philosophical and metaphysical terms to the Chinese language. In Central Asia there were numerous flourishing Buddhist monasteries in the 6th-9th centuries A.D. and these had frequent contacts with Buddhist monasteries in India. The one great civilizing force in the life of Tibet has been that of Buddhism which the country received from India. Some of the Indian Buddhist monks who went to Tibet as missionaries have been honoured as saints by the Tibetan people. The Buddhist universities of Nalanda, Vikramashila, Odantapuri and Jagaddala received many students from Asian countries for training in Buddhist philosophy and metaphysics, ritual and ethics.

IV

These contacts, however, ceased by the beginning of the 13th century A.D. It was the period of the Muslim invasions in India and the old university centres were destroyed by the invaders. There is some evidence to believe that Islam spread to Malaya and Indonesia through India and where the Hindu-Buddhist role ended in these areas the Indian-Islamic role began. With the advent of the Western rule in Asia, Indian contacts with the countries of south-east Asia were once again resumed but on a totally different basis. The annexation of Burma was carried out with the help of mercenary Indian troops and these troops also functioned as the sword-arm of the British empire in Asia and Africa. The growth of the plantation economy created a demand for cheap Indian labour and thousands of Indians were taken to Malaya and Africa under the indentured labour system. In the 20's and 30's as many as 300,000 Indians migrated annually to Burma and in 1931 the Indians formed 7 per cent of the total population in that country. At about this time the Indian population in Malaya formed 14.2 per cent of the population and in Ceylon they formed 10 per cent of the total population in 1946. Most of these were

employed as labourers on the plantations and in agriculture but there were also large numbers of Indians engaged in the white-collar professions like business, law and medicine. In countries like Burma the Indian moneylender and banker also became a prominent element in the economy. The large influx of Indians in these countries soon attracted adverse attention from the people of these areas and the governments there began enforcing restrictive legislation in the 30's. During World War II thousands of Indians trekked back to India and most of them found it extremely difficult to return to the lands of their pre-war domicile after the conclusion of hostilities. But there still remained a sizable number of Indians in the countries of south-east Asia.

Apart from the immigration of thousands of Indians, India has had very important trade-relations with Asia and Africa. Before the war India accounted for 60 per cent of the total export trade of Burma while the figure for imports from Burma was equally impressive—55.6 per cent of the total imports into Burma. Even after the war, when the general pattern of trade had changed considerably India's trade with south-east Asian countries maintained the level of nearly 30 per cent of the country's total trade reaching in 1950 the 242.2 million-dollar-mark. For the West India has been one of the major suppliers of raw-materials and an equally important importer of finished goods.

In the understanding of the West the study of Western literature in India and the attendance of thousands of Indian students in universities in England, the countries of Europe and the United States have been of vital significance. We have already referred to the effect of Western education in India in an earlier chapter. The role of the Western-educated Indian in Indian society has been somewhat contradictory. In the earlier returnees the dominant attitude was that of intense admiration for Western ideas, attitudes, techniques, institutions and ideals combined with a somewhat derogatory evaluation of the indigenous institutions. But this mood changed rapidly. The Indian students living abroad soon acquired an understanding of both the "good" and "bad" aspects of Western life and in the process assimilated ideas of a militant nationa-

lism. The practice of racial discrimination in some of the Western countries also galled their sense of pride and this element of the consciousness of racial differences became a vital catalyst in the Indian analysis of the West. The growth of left-wing opinion in the West also produced its own influences on the receptive minds of the Indian students studying abroad and many of them, prior to their return to India, became convinced radicals. To them the West stood condemned both as a stronghold of racial arrogance and capitalism and generally appeared as an imperialist exploiter of underdeveloped nations. This identification of exploitation with the White race, whatever may be the content of truth in such an assumption, generally created an anti-Western attitude which was nurtured by a sense of inferiority, a hurt racial pride and an anger that was powerless in itself. There was thus an ambivalence in such an Indian attitude towards the West. On the one hand the Indian intellectual drew his intellectual sustenance from ideas current in the West but tended to reject the West at the same time. This created a great conflict and a paradox which has not been solved even today.

The Indian political contacts with the nations of Asia began in the 20's. Earlier in 1893 Swami Vivekananda visited Japan and on his return to India advised the people to study closely how Japan had forged ahead in the modern world. Between 1898 and 1906 the number of Indian students going to Japan increased from one to sixty. The Russo-Japanese war of 1905 was interpreted as a war between the occident and the orient in which the orient was for the first time defeating a European power. But if there was admiration for the Japanese achievements there was also apprehension when it became clear that Japan had taken the path of imperialism. In 1928 Mr. Satyamurti, a leading Congressman, stated that Japan was becoming "tainted with imperialism." On the other hand, there was going on a rediscovery of China with whom was felt a certain community of suffering. The Indian and Chinese nationalist movements were parallel processes and Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the Father of Chinese Nationalism, averred that the "non-co-operation movement in India was an object-lesson for the Chinese Nationalist movement." All through the sufferings of China, as a result

of the Japanese aggression, the Indian National Congress repeatedly expressed its sympathy for that ancient nation.

In 1928 the Congress had set up a special bureau for foreign affairs indicating the widening of the horizons for politically-conscious India. Indian representatives began attending international conferences. Thus in 1936 Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon represented India at the World Peace Congress held at Brussels. The growth of Fascism and Nazism in Europe provoked serious warnings to the democratic nations in Europe from Jawaharlal Nehru, the leading spokesman of Indian internationalism. In 1936 Nehru appealed for aid to the Republicans in Spain and in 1938 the Congress expressed its sympathy with the Czech aspirations for freedom.

Ever since Gandhi's efforts in South Africa, Indians had repeatedly criticised the racial laws of that country. The behaviour of the white man in South Africa threw into vivid relief some of the worst aspects of racial discrimination as practised by the White races against the coloured peoples. Colonialism and Racialism, therefore, became two fixed points in Indian international thinking and virtually became the yard-stick for the measurement and classification of peoples and nations.

V

The advent of freedom created a new situation in the internationalist thinking in India. The manner of the withdrawal of the British power successfully eliminated the long-standing bitterness between the two countries and the enemies of yesterday became friends overnight. The hostility towards Britain disappeared but the subconscious rancour against the West was not easily forgotten. While it was not possible to withdraw into isolation it was also difficult to establish an immediate rapprochement with the West. On the other hand there was a growing interest in Asian affairs and a certain measure of kinship with the peoples of Asia was instinctively felt. The initial attitude, therefore, was one of reluctance to get involved with the West compensated for by another parallel attitude to establish a basis of close collaboration with nations of Asia and

Africa. At the same time the influence of the West, going back over nearly a century and half, could not be repudiated, for the Western ideas that were assimilated over this long period had struck deep roots in the minds of the Indian intellectuals.

In being a new nation-state India possessed a certain advantage in forging new international relations. She could start on a clean slate uncluttered by any previous commitments. The initial attitude, therefore, was one of friendliness for all peoples and nations and opposition to colonialism and racialism as political, economic and social systems. But in the prevailing trend of international developments it was inevitable that sharp lines would be drawn over the checker-board of international politics. The Cold War began soon after the cessation of hostilities and international forces began to get polarized into two groups, one of them being led by the U.S.A. and the other by the Soviet Union. One of the consequences of this was the progressive extension of the principles of military alliances which were mutually exclusive as between the two great powers. As a military power India was weak and the nation could ill afford to divert to military expansion the resources badly needed for the economic stabilization of the country. But India could possess another kind of power, namely, moral power, and this could be had only if India remained uninvolved in the conflicts of the two power-groups. India, therefore, decided not to get involved, either emotionally or operationally, with either side of the conflict for two reasons. One is that for India the quest for political, economic and social freedom is of the highest significance. The elimination of colonialism and all other forms of domination, in terms of India's reasoning, is not a time-bound incident but is a continuing process. And while Britain had withdrawn from India there still remained small strips of territory held by France and Portugal on Indian soil itself. France had agreed to negotiate with India for the transfer of her territories and these negotiations ultimately proved successful and the French territories of Pondicherry, Mahe, Karikal, Yennam and Chandranagore were handed over to India. But the Portuguese remained stubborn and the problem of the withdrawal of the Portuguese colonial regime from Goa,

Daman, and Diu is not yet solved. In this struggle against alien domination on Indian soil after 1947 India expected that the leaders of the democratic world would unequivocally support the Indian demand. But this did not happen and for obvious reasons. In the democratic world the preoccupation was primarily with the maintenance of the *status quo* of power in Europe to which all other problems were subordinated. There was a great reluctance to offend France and Portugal as they were considered to be important members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Under such circumstances the claims of the Western world to be a crusader for the free world appeared, to the Indian mind, questionable. On the other hand intelligent Indians had seen that the Soviet Union had carried out a spectacular expansion in eastern Europe and with that world, except for a handful of communists, there was neither ideological nor emotional affinity. Again, peace for India was indispensable if she was to survive as a new nation-state and devote her time and energies to the gigantic task of national reconstruction. From the Indian point of view, therefore, there was no alternative to a posture of neutrality in the conflicts of the power-groups in the formation of India's foreign policy. But this operational neutrality must not be confused with moral neutrality ; it is not intended as a policy of "plague on both your houses". As Nehru stated : "Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened, or where aggression takes place, we cannot be and shall not be neutral."

This policy, as stated by Walter Lippman, is "the natural expression of the vital interests of a new state." India believes that by not involving herself in the thrusts and counter-thrusts of the two power-systems she can help stabilize peace and extend the area of peace. This area of peace, in India's thinking, can hold the balance of power and thus ensure the continuance of peace. From Afghanistan to Annam the situation in Asia is characterized as an uneasy fluidity. The area has to deal with a number of conflicts. Pakistan and Afghanistan are at loggerheads on the question of Pakhtunistan or the demand of the Pathan for self-determination. India and Pakistan are at cross-purposes with each other on account of Kashmir, the problem of the settlement of the claims of refugee property and the

sharing of the waters of the Punjab. There is considerable annoyance between Ceylon and India about the problem of people of Indian origin in Ceylon. India does not feel that her independence is complete so long as the Portuguese maintain their imperial possessions on Indian soil. Indo-China is virtually divided; Korea became a tragic battle-ground and Burma and Indonesia were convulsed with internal difficulties and revolts. Each of these is a local problem and it is in India's interests to keep them localized. This will be impossible if India were to join one of the two camps.

The general objectives of the policy pursued so far by India in international affairs are the quest for freedom and justice, peace and economic and social progress. India has consistently championed the cause of independence for the peoples ruled by the imperial powers all over the world. India took great interest in the Indonesian struggle for independence and convened a conference for that purpose in New Delhi in 1949. This was attended by delegates from Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Iraq, the Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. India also made vigorous moves in the Security Council of the United Nations in the Indonesia case and as a result of Asian and American pressure Indonesian freedom became a vivid reality. More recently India made significant contributions to the settlement of the Indo-Chinese issue at the Geneva Conference held in 1954. Consequently India also accepted responsibility as a member of the International Commission set up for the settlement of certain outstanding disputes between the two sides in the conflict in Indo-China. Likewise, earlier, India assumed an active role in the Korean armistice parleys and her representatives acquitted themselves creditably, earning praise from both sides in their work for the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission.

Within the brief period of ten years since independence, India has made her influence felt in the councils of the nations. Her diplomacy in the present context could only mean two things. One is the task of keeping open the opportunity of maintaining continuous contacts for negotiations between nations in a world sharply divided into two mutually-exclusive

power systems. The second is to ensure that legitimate diplomacy is not used to secure the ends of power-politics. Her early recognition of and generally friendly relations with the new government of China gave her a unique opportunity of serving as a point of contact between the East and the West in Asia. In Asia itself India has been able to maintain the most friendly relations with Burma, Indonesia, Cambodia and Laos and this area of friendly understanding is gradually extended in the West in recent years. India's relations with Afghanistan are very friendly and there is a community of views and interests between the two leading nations of the Arab world, namely, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. On the positive side and in concrete terms India has been a leading member of the Colombo Plan aimed at regional development in the Indian ocean area. At the Bandung Conference held in Indonesia in April, 1955, India played a leading role as a mediator and conciliator between members divided by ideological and political interests. Since 1947 India has been attempting to create opportunities of close liaison among the nations of Asia. The Asian Relations Conference of 1947, the conference called in February 1949 to explore ways and means of aiding Burma in her difficulties, the conference on Indonesia of 1949, the Colombo Conference of 1954 and the Bandung Conference of Asian and African nations held in 1955, are all significant landmarks on the diplomatic road traversed by the nation during the last ten years.

India is the acknowledged advocate of certain basic principles which, in her opinion, should form the bed-rock of international relations. These are stated as the well-known Five Principles : (1) Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) non-aggression, (3) non-interference in each other's internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefits, and (5) peaceful coexistence of differing political, economic or social systems. These first appeared, curiously enough, as a preamble to the Indo-Chinese treaty in which Tibet figured prominently. India had acknowledged China's suzerainty over Tibet but urged a peaceful settlement of the problem relating to the actual exercise of this sovereignty. In complete disregard of India's requests the Chinese communist armies occupied Tibet in 1950-51 and after some complicated negotiations

the Indian and Chinese differences over this problem were ironed out by the Trade Treaty referred to above. In the opinion of many competent observers the military occupation of Tibet by China represents the greatest setback to Indian diplomacy. The Chinese action in Tibet was tantamount to aggression but India could not do anything about it as she had already accepted China's claim of sovereignty over Tibet. Whether this acceptance of the Chinese claim was a correct step may be argued and has been argued both nationally and internationally. And the result of it has been that the whole strategic set-up affecting India's north-eastern frontier has been changed and the Himalayas no longer afford the country that protection which an independent Tibet would have given (*see* K. M. Panikkar, *Geographical Factors in Indian History*, 1955, pp. 54-55).

What is the importance of these Five Principles as an instrument of ushering security and peace among nations? As they appear there is little that is startling or new in them. Respect for sovereignty, non-aggression and non-interference are unexceptional doctrines if practised with the same sincerity on both sides. But the pertinent criticism has been that they take too much for granted. It has also been pointed out that the Cominform has been an agency for interference in the internal affairs of nations, for, it has been generally known and stated on good grounds that the various communist parties in Asian countries act in close liaison with the leadership of the Cominform. So long as the Cominform is not dissolved, both in theory and in practice, the acceptance, by communist governments, of the principles of non-interference and coexistence cannot be regarded as without significant mental reservations. In this context it is noteworthy that at the conclusion of his tour in India Mr. Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Russia, in answer to a question specifically stated that the Cominform is a legitimate organ of international "working class" co-operation and as such cannot be dissolved.

The visit of Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Bulganin, Prime Minister of the Soviet Union, to India in December 1955 marked a high point in the development of Indo-Russian friendship. This visit was in return for the visit paid by Prime Minister Nehru

to the Soviet Union earlier in the year. Before this India was visited by Mr. Chou En-Lai, the Chinese Prime Minister, U Nu, the Premier of Burma and leaders of several other countries. The Russian leaders were given a very enthusiastic reception and this was interpreted in the West as an indication that India was so close to the Communist bloc as to be counted as one of its members, an assumption that has been vigorously denied by Indian spokesmen. There is little reason to assume that there has been a change in India's foreign policy as a consequence of the visit by the Russian leaders though Indo-Russian technical and economic co-operation has certainly increased. But similar aid has been received, and in a much larger measure, by India from the Western countries and particularly from the United States and if this has not affected the main lines of India's foreign policy it cannot be assumed that the Russian aid will do so. But it must be conceded that India's relations with the West, if correct, have not been without periods of friction. With Great Britain India's relations have been generally very friendly and India's continuing membership in the Commonwealth is proof of this relationship. Indian relations with Canada have been becoming very friendly and similar is the case with Australia. With South Africa, however, the case is different and it is tied up with the racial theories espoused by the South African government. These have been subjects of debate and action by the United Nations and the problem is not yet easy of solution.

India's relations with the United States began with a great amount of goodwill and friendly feelings. The Americans, by and large, have been India's traditional friends in her fight for freedom and there has also been large economic aid coming to India from the U.S. over the past ten years, aid which India has gratefully acknowledged. But there have been certain difficulties besetting Indo-American relations. The major friction proceeds from the realities of the Cold War in the understanding of which there is considerable honest difference of opinion between the two countries. The American opinion has been convinced that the communist bloc is aggressive and is intent on carrying out subversion and infiltration where possible and aggression where necessary and desirable. To

counter this the only effective posture is that of a "position of strength" from which alone peace by negotiation with the communist bloc is possible. As a consequence of this line of argument, the United States has striven to create military alliances with nations of western Europe and South-East Asia. Efforts have also been made to bring in such nations as are willing to commit themselves in mutual defence agreements in the Middle East. India has shown opposition to such pacts on the ground that, far from solving the problem of keeping peace in the world, these pacts increase international tensions. This basic difference in approach to international problems has been one of the major factors in creating difficulties in Indo-American relations. While India finds the excessive reliance of the United States on military pacts and alliances, as instruments of international security and peace, disturbing, India's grounds for opposition to such American actions have been annoying and incomprehensible to the Americans. Barring this there has been general goodwill and friendly feeling between the peoples of India and America and though there is considerable room for improvement in mutual relations between the two countries there is little that is basically wrong with them.

What is the future of Indian relations with the West? It must be stressed here that the Indian contact with the West has been a long one extending over a century and half. India has assimilated the Western social, economic and political ideals in her thought and her contact with the world, in recent times, has been through the West. In contrast the rediscovery of Asia has been a recent phenomenon and, in the nature of things, there will be considerable preoccupation with Asia for a long time. But preoccupation with Asia should not and may not mean India turning her back on the West. The Western impact on India has been in the nature of a stimulus to which there has been a characteristically Indian response. On its own part the West rarely tried to remould India into a Western image and what has been happening is an interaction between the two, with India assimilating certain traits in Western culture modified to suit her own specific requirements. Under the circumstances, therefore, if India refuses consciously to imitate the West it will also be difficult for her to repudiate the West

which she has assimilated through her long contact with it. What appears likely is that in India the East and the West may finally create a synthesis representing a new type of civilization and culture in which there is a fusion of some of the finest values created by Indian tradition with the dynamism of the West. This is already made manifest in the way the nation has been dealing with the problem of her national reconstruction. In India today there is parliamentary democracy at work and in her Five Year Plans the country has undertaken a revolution by consent. While there is reverence for the Indian past and a pride felt in past achievements there is also impatience with the poverty and penury of the present and the methods used to correct the profound imbalance in social, economic and cultural life are as much Indian in thought as they are Western in technique. Geographically India is a bridge that joins the Orient with the Occident and it is this role which she will play in an increasing measure in the near future.

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